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KID606

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Richie Hawtin Techno Animal

Henry Flynt Oneness Of Juju William Winant Henry Cow Aphex Twin Coltrane's last date

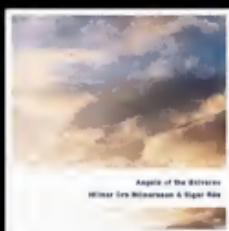
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> ANGELS OF THE UNIVERSE FILM SCREENINGS

In addition to the release of the 'Angels Of the Universe' soundtrack, FatCat have obtained UK certification for the film itself (previously unseen in the UK), and organised a series of one-off screenings around the country. The film will be shown alongside two Sigur Rós videos - 'Svefn-G-Englar' and a brand new video of 'Vidr Vel Til Leftrorsa'. The scheduled screenings (and phone numbers for ticket info) run as follows. We suggest booking early to avoid disappointment:

- 01/10 - Duke of York's, Preston Circus, Brighton, BN1 4AA. 01273-602503
- 02/10 - Phoenix Picture House, 57 Walton Street, Oxford. OX2 6AE. 01865-512526
- 03/10 - Watershed, 1 Canongate, Harbourside, Bristol. BS1 3TX. 0117-9253845
- 04/10 - Chapter, Market Road, Cardiff. CF5 1QE. 029-20304400
- 09/10 - Cornerhouse, 70 Oxford Street, Manchester. M1 5NH. 0161-2001500
- 10/10 - Midlands Art Centre, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. B12 9OH. 0121-4403838
- 11/10 - The Horse Hospital, The Colonnade, Russell Square, London. 020-78333644
- 12/10 - Broadway, Nottingham Media Centre, 14 Broad Street, Nottingham. NG1 3AL. 0115-9526611
- 13/10 - Showroom, 7 Posterngate Row, Sheffield. S1 2BX. 0114-2757727
- 15/10 - Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH3 9EZ. 0131-2282688
- 16/10 - Glasgow Film House - 12 Rose Street, Glasgow. G3 6R8. 0141-3328128

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The hair bear bunch: Acid Mothers Temple

Official response

In his response to my review of Miles Davis's *Live At Filmore East*, (Letters, *The Wire* 211), Ricky Frystek said I was in error for not citing Miles - Festival De Juan Pines (sic) as a "very official" recording (the prefatory 1969 of the album's title was not italicised in the body of the letter). Contrary to Mr Frystek's claim, Sony Japan's 1993 release of the material was unauthorised, causing Davis's estate to initiate legal action. Eventually, Sony settled with the estate, who in turn compensated the musicians for Sony's unauthorised use of the material; but this hardly legitimises Sony's initial release of the material.

Bill Shoemaker, Damascus, USA

Myth the point

The feature on Acid Mothers Temple (*The Wire* 210) started, "everyone who's seen them live will tell you straight..." and then went on to talk about "reinventing rock music" and other such nonsense. I was squirming with embarrassment reading it. I know *The Wire* likes a bit of mythmaking, but this was ridiculous. The Acid Mothers make loud, noisy rock music with lots of guitars. They haven't "reinvented" anything. I've seen them live twice now and each time they were upstaged, firstly by Volcano The Bear and secondly by Peter Brötzmann and Hamid Drake, each of whom in their very different ways gave a hugely powerful performance without relying on effects pedals or amplifiers turned to 11 to mesmerise their audience. Acid Mothers remind me of my little brother desperately trying to impress me with his new electric guitar. It's very nice of Makoto Kawabata to channel the cosmic sounds he receives for us to hear; I only

wish they were a little more interesting. Anyone who's seen them live will tell you that.

Thomas Mills via email

At no point in the Acid Mothers Temple article did the writer, David Keenan, claim that AMT are "reinventing rock", as you put it. The second part of the passage you quote actually read: "... Acid Mothers Temple have single-handedly rebirthed rock in a cartoon not of hair and fuzz". Which is an entirely different proposition to one which claims they have reinvented the music – Ed

News of the Don

I was pleased to read that your readers still care about Don Ayler. Unfortunately I was a bit disheartened to read Val Wilmer's response (*Letters, The Wire* 210) about her mental problems. I wish she had mentioned when she attempted to interview Don.

I am a friend of his, and I am pleased to write that he is doing quite well. For someone who will be 60 next year he is in good health. He does not drink, and is working on quitting smoking. The drug use and the mental problems are things of the long past.

Many people forget that Don had quite a career apart from his brother. Shortly before Albert's death, a Japanese magazine published an interview with Albert. He stated that Don was a better saxophone player than he was (people forget that Don started out on sax). I saw Don play in a Cleveland bar in April 1977 in the Pharaoh Sanders band. He was quite impressive (remember, this is years after his illness). He also recorded a set of three albums in Florence for the Frame label in 1981. They received impressive reviews in the Canadian jazz magazine *Coda*.

I interviewed Don and his father on two separate

occasions over WCSB in 1997. Listeners were impressed with Don and his stories. Admittedly it is a bit difficult to remember details about your work 40 years later. Don was correct about two facts which he did not know I could double check on. For example, he always insisted that "Our Prayer" was played at Coltrane's funeral. All the books claimed it was "The Truth Is Marching In" (they kept regurgitating an incorrect *New York Times* article). According to Fujikawa's Coltrane discography published by Scarecrow Press, there exists a tape which does indeed confirm that "Our Prayer" was performed.

Don does still practise the trumpet, and is currently working on a book about the Ayler brothers. I am the co-author, and he gets half the credit as well as half the royalties. One reason he does not do interviews is that he values his privacy. Another reason is that interviewers tend to focus on the sensationalistic aspects of his career, like the illness or his brother's mysterious death. More importantly, interviews are diluting the potential value of his memoirs. I feel that his life would make a great biopic, especially in the hands of someone like Spike Lee (Don jokes he'd like to see Wesley Snipes play him). If it is given away through interviews it becomes public domain, robbing Don of any potential income. That is another reason for a denial of interviews – he feels he was robbed by Bernard Stollman, as well as Bob Thiele – he desires to prevent further disadvantageous deals.

Right now the book is about 350 pages of manuscripts. After reading Peter Niklas Wilson's book *Albert Ayler – Spirits Rejoice*, I felt one would have to go the extra mile to be in that good company. Even though Wilson's analyses (as well as WA Beldow's articles in *Jazz Monthly*, from autumn 1967 to early 1968) are impeccable, and it would be redundant to go



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Letters

over that road again, it will feature earlier reviews from long gone jazz magazines which present the divergence of opinions that made Ayler's career so controversial. It will also have a family tree supplied by Ayler's cousin, as well as some pictures of Ayler that even the family never saw. Not many people realise that Ayler's paternal aunt was a gospel singer of note in Cleveland. At a concert which was reviewed in the local papers, she sang many of the songs that Ayler recorded on the Spirituals album. I am trying to track down a copy of Ayler's high school yearbook, since I have heard there is a great picture of Ayler on the golf links. So I hope your readers are patient.

Richard J Kolode Seven Hills, USA

All steamed up

I like your magazine. A lot. But on rare occasions you find a way to infuriate me. The last such occurrence was provided by Ben Watson, reviewing the two latest Steamboat Switzerland CDs (Soundcheck, *The Wire* 210). I had not seen such amateurism and preconceived disdain in your pages for a long time. Being an avant garde music reviewer myself, I received the same discs with the same promotional material. Reading the press release, it all became clear: the group made one fatal mistake. They used the expression 'Progressive rock'. Suddenly, the reviewer associated the music with old timers like Emerson, Lake & Palmer, and since it had become necessary in avant circles to put down Prog rock whenever the occasion arises, Steamboat Switzerland paid the price.

I have nothing against Prog rock myself. It was my first non-radio musical experience; it led me to avant garde music and I still enjoy listening to it. But your reviewer clearly did not listen closely to the two discs. Granted, *Budapest* is not their best effort, but *AC/DB* (Hayden) has everything their 1998 debut *Live* had, in a more mature and condensed form. What is more important is that the reviewer failed to mention the virtuosity of the musicians – Lucas Niggli is one hell of a drummer, Dominik Blum's Hammond organ playing has nothing to do with John Medeski (of Medeski, Martin & Wood), a reviewer I find offensive in this context – and the originality of the music. Steamboat Switzerland successfully ally the complexity of Prog rock, the power of Metal and the dizzying void of early minimalism. The simple fact that both CDs were released on Grob, one of the most exciting avant garde labels of the last two years, should have prompted Watson to try to understand what was going on in front of his ears. Then again, that's what happens when you use the cursed word 'Progressive', the most pejorative word in the British music press these days. Genre bashing is a good way to lose credit.

François Couture Sherbrooke, Canada

Leave the Guy alone

Is it too late too comment on Mark Sinker's review of *Inscape-Tableaux* by The Barry Guy New Orchestra (Soundcheck, *The Wire* 208)? When your reviewer addresses the music he is quite positive, but the overall impression is one of irritation. The cover is dull – and yes, Guy's Maye label generally has zinger cover art. The title of the piece is unalarming; granted 'tableaux' is a little unexpected in this area of music, but isn't 'inscape' an expressive and appropriate word? Horror of horrors, Guy's got some funding from the Irish Arts Council. Some of us are happy that the sector has got a few pounds, and nothing suggests that Guy's music is shaped by a desire for funding.

What really bothers Sinker is that in the title and liner notes there is no overt reference to the liberating power of free music, no statement that Guy is committed to the 'total transformation of everything'. Does Sinker really believe that improvised music has a serious role to play in politically transforming society? I don't know whether Sinker is active in revolutionary politics or whether he'd just feel better about sitting at home listening to a BGNQ recording if, instead of being titled *Inscape-Tableaux*, it were titled *Vive El Comandante Marcos!* Venceremos!

From what I have seen and heard of it, Barry Guy's musical practice could be summed up in this way: the perpetual search for new contexts and forms for the music; extraordinary attention to the individual voice and technique of those he is playing with; music making with, not egotistically against, other players; uncompromisingly committed performance on all occasions, respecting the audience even while challenging it; openness to the possibilities of the moment; openness towards audience members, often young musicians, who want to speak to him after a performance. This does not suggest a muffling of creativity or a retreat into 'a zone of psychic shelter'. In the current state of politics and in a subgenre of an already minor sector of the music world, is there more the music can do than send out into the world a model of creative thinking and energy, and so embody a spirit of potential transformation?

Barra O'Searcoid Dublin, Ireland

Gender Imbalance

As one of the most progressive hubs for music journalism around, I do find one thing in particular a little disconcerting. There seems to be a lack of depth coverage of female artists in your magazine. The reviews and Bits sections see women popping up often enough, but once you hit the larger articles, they all disappear. It appears as though we're lucky to see a female artist on the cover of *The Wire* once a year. Surely artists such as Kaffe Matthews, Pauline

Oliveros, Blonde Redhead, Bahamadia, Peggy Lee (Vancouver cellist), Mrs Cax, Low, Alice Coltrane, Susie Ibarra, Cat Power and Mecca Normal deserve more than a glance. Oh, and keep the Peaches coming. Sherry Ostapovitch via email

Model magazine

Love The Wire. Love the new design. Love everything about you people. Have been reading on and off since 1984, when the likes of David Sanborn would pop up in yr pages now and then. Thankful I could, even then, sift through the chaff and get to the good stuff. I still have an issue from 1985 with Cobrane on the cover. Among other things, thank you for introducing a punk to improvised music many, many years ago. It helped me to understand jazz and just about everything else that makes life worth living. I was the publisher of a visual arts magazine called *New Art Examiner* (in Chicago) a few years back, and I constantly used *The Wire* as a model for what a magazine could be. It keeps getting better and better. I even love your business model, if you have one. Anyway, fuck models. Whatever you're doing clearly works.

Grant Samuels Pittsburgh, USA

Happiness is a warm Fug

I love your mag and as soon as I have paid off a terrible online telephone bill, it is on my list to subscribe... Here in Dubble You country *The Wire* is a raft to civilization (not to sound cliché... eh, why not!). But you must do a Fugs article! If you have recently and I missed it, strike that and well done. But if not, please consider. Anyway, thanks for many enlightening issues (although you must get over the Fushisusha thing).

Mike Kittell Kerrville, USA

Passing Fad

I remember Chris Bohn once describing *Fad Gadget's* 'Rocky's Hand' as 'an electro sicko classic'. I agree... wholeheartedly. I see *Fad Gadget's* name re-emerging on line-ups. Please do a feature. Thank you.

Tap Water via email

Corrections

Issue 211 In the Pandit Pran Nath article, the photo of his concert at the Cathedral of St John the Divine should have been dated 1991.

Issue 250 In the Acid Mothers Temple article, the photo of Makoto Kawabata bowing his guitar in July 2001 at Barbo Tower in Paris should have been credited to Florent Delval/www.cho-yaba.com.

Issue 209 In *On Location*, the Muxuk photos should have been credited to Philip Sherriff. □

Coming next month

Staubgold CD

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Rhythmic revolutionaries. By Chris Menist



"The spiritual nature of African music is in everything," says James 'Plunky' Branch, saxophonist founder of underated Afro-jazz/funk group Oneness Of JuJu. "When I play on Sunday at my church, I play with the same exact breath, fingers and scales that I use on Saturday night."

I'm sitting with Plunky in his living room in Richmond, Virginia. His son's dog, wearing a pink spiky collar, occasionally interrupts our conversation, but otherwise it's a peaceful, relaxing afternoon as he reaches back across three decades to recall JuJu's glory days. Whilst principally known for the heavy Afro-funk workout "African Rhythms", the group touched base with many of the key figures in American black music and politics. The finest moments from that career have at last been documented on African Rhythms: Oneness Of JuJu 1970-1982 (Strut), a double CD that compiles their earlier cosmic jazz visions with a selection of their later funk and R&B phase.

Born in 1947, Plunky grew up in the racially segregated town of Richmond. The prevailing injustice affected Plunky profoundly. "If you looked a white person in the face you might be in trouble," he recalls. "And if you looked a white woman in the face, you might be lynched! Life in Richmond affected my outlook, and affected my politics, and ultimately affected my music."

At 23, Plunky dropped out of New York's Columbia University to pursue music. Although he answered his draft call for Vietnam, he deserted after learning how to handle a firearm. On the run from the FBI, and with his head full of revolutionary sentiments, he headed west to San Francisco, where he soon found himself in a milieu that included black activists George Jackson and Angela Davis. Declively, he also met South African exile Ndikho Xaba, a versatile jazz musician who boasted amongst his talents piano, percussion, trumpet and "seaweed horn".

"Ndiko taught us to play African music and improvise and use music as a political and cultural force," explains Plunky. After working with Ndiko And The Netwits, he was inspired to form his own group, JuJu, with percussionist Babatunde Michael Lea, vibesman on Moshe, and old college friend Ken Shebala on

bass. Another associate was percussionist Bill Summers, who taught Plunky the rudiments of Afro-Cuban percussion before joining Herbie Hancock's Headhunters.

"The name JuJu was not chosen out of happenstance," Plunky says now. "There are four or five definitions of the word 'JuJu', but one of them is the idea of being able to affect another person's subconscious with something that you do."

In New York, Charles Tolliver's and Stanley Cowell's Strata East label was giving as much financial and artistic control to artists as possible; an obvious home for Plunky and co's first album, *Message From Mozambique*. "[Label's like] Strata East, Tribe, Black Fire and Strata [from Detroit] represented the first time in history where black musicians made this kind of revolutionary stand and controlled their own musical destinies," states Plunky. "We then moved back east, and based ourselves in New York. There was a loft jazz scene, Anthony Braxton, Julius Hemphill, Chapter 2: Ntsa [Mozambique's follow-up] took us more in the direction of black nationalism." Unfortunately, when he turned up to meet the label for the first time, he was arrested by the FBI, and ended up serving 30 days in jail for desertion.

Eventually, JuJu fell into a loft jazz scene which revolved around venues such as the Spirit House (run by the poet Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones), and The East in Brooklyn, which housed spoken word, music, and radical theatre. Some of these performances drew them to the attention of Omette Coleman, Plunky recalls. "One day [Omette] said, 'You guys are doing great things. Where are you staying? If you want, you can stay at my place.' A couple of days later he said, 'Listen, I have this gallery downstairs, a loft upstairs - here's the keys. I'm going abroad for six weeks'."

The commune lived at Coleman's apartment, using the saxophonist's reel to reel tape recorder to preserve their rehearsals. Coleman occasionally joined their impromptu jamming sessions. Sun Ra was another figure they touched base with, and he even used some members of the group for his epic *Space Is The Place*. By 1974, the pressure of New York life had become too much and the group decamped to Richmond, by

now more relaxed racially than during Plunky's childhood, but still only slowly breaking the links with its past. Renting a cheap space still meant being in the ghetto, and they set up the JuJu Raga Arts House, loosely based on their experience in Omette Coleman's gallery.

A couple of original members quit, and Plunky's brother Muji joined on bass. They also acquired a female singer, Lady Eke-Ete. This called for a change of name: Oneness Of JuJu. Richmond didn't provide a huge market for avant garde jazz, so more R&B elements were incorporated in order to keep working.

"If we put a backbeat to Afro-Cuban rhythms, people in Richmond could be drawn to it and it didn't really change anything about our message," reasons Plunky.

At this stage they came into contact with Jimmy Gray, a radio DJ and distribution rap for CTI and Strata East. Because of dissatisfaction with the latter, in 1975 Gray and Plunky decided to set up their own label, Black Fire. The label's debut was African rhythms, which Gray assisted in producing. The title track, with horn arrangements, undulating drum grooves and waves of African percussion, reflects all the musical elements they had absorbed over the previous years. For this new period of their career it was as much a statement of intent as well as a recap of their past incarnations. "Funky Wood", a balafon-led West African number, was also used in the credits for a local radio station's news programme.

Despite African Rhythms – and its successor, Space Jungle Luu – being received well on both sides of the Atlantic, financial limitations meant no further Oneness product appeared until 1982, with their commercial apex, the more discoffed "Every Way But Loose". Plunky has recently convened a touring version of Oneness Of JuJu, with which he hopes to recapture the driving ecstasy of "African Rhythms". "We were trying to make a song that people could dance to," he concludes, "but the extended message would have been: even when you're dancing to Chuck Berry or Motown, these are African rhythms that make you dance and clap your hands." □ *African Rhythms: Oneness Of JuJu 1970-1982* is out now on Strut. The group play a short UK tour this month, see *Our There*

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Ekkehard Ehlers

Glitches and devils. By Philip Sherburne

"When I was 16 I heard Ayler's music for the first time," says Ekkehard Ehlers, the Frankfurt-based electronics perpetrator of the nine-CD *Ekkehard Ehlers Plays Albert Ayler* (Staubgold). "To me it was as if I heard music for the first time." Though in the past, Ehlers has sampled his near-soundslike namesake as part of Autopoesies, you'd need a finely tuned ear to detect any fine music in the two digitally manipulated cello compositions making up *Plays Albert Ayler*. For all the deep impression the late saxophonist made on Ehlers as a teenager, its emotional impact has been refined into the second of a series of concept-driven "tributes" to various 20th century artists. Preceded by the *Plays Robert Johnson* 7" (Bottrop-Boy) and soon to be followed by the *Plays Cassavetes* mini-CD (also on Staubgold), *Plays Albert Ayler* is not a reordering of Albert Ayler samples, as the title might suggest, but a piece Ehlers wrote for solo cello, recorded and then digitally manipulated, freezing and fragmenting the instrument in mid-flow. Free jazz meets glitch, sure, but as a meticulously composed work, it's worlds away from the electronic improv of, say, Polwheele or the label Grub. "The *Plays* series deals with 'reference,'" explains Ehlers. "Everyone is sampling: sampling is the figure of historic devices in digital music. My idea is not [just] to sample, but also to refer: historic places and figures." Ehlers has assembled an intriguing constellation of figures, next in line after actor/film maker John Cassavetes are German author Hubert Fichte and finally the English composer Cornelius Cardew. Only the Cardew piece will contain actual samples – well, you can't sample a writer, as Ehlers points out. "Reference" is a basic structure in digital music," he continues, citing American software manipulators Terri Thaemitz and Akira Rabelais, as well as his recent collaborator Stephan Mattheu, with whom he has recorded a CD called *Heroin* for Starpless's Brotbrombe series. "I'm trying to deal with that more abstractly." That abstraction is as much macroscopic as microscopic: the back cover of each record features a photograph of the region the artist of the title came from, filmed by a NASA satellite.

An artist and educator based in Frankfurt, Ehlers recorded his first works for Mille Plateaux and its

offshoot Ritorrelli in 1998, as part of the aforementioned Autopoesies duo with Sebastian Meissner. Since then he has used the aliases Auch und Betrieb (for Force Inc. and Klang Elektronik respectively), and teamed up with Karoche Kalk's Albrecht Kunze in the group Marz. But the current *Plays...* series, released under his own name, elaborates on his interpretation of a critique by Frankfurt school philosopher Theodor Adorno, which he had paraphrased in his sleeve notes to an earlier album, *Betrieb* (2000, Mille Plateaux). "Tinkering is still a problem in electronic music," the note proclaimed. "It means that [a preoccupation with] cables, plugs, etcetera, is too much involved in the musical structure," Ehlers elaborates today. "You have to work too long on the sounds, surface and organisation, so that in the end there's no idea of content any more. That is also my problem with electronic music."

Accordingly, Ehlers avoids the traditional approaches of hardware, MIDI and software sound design, often concentrating entirely on the manipulation of fragments taken from existing music history. Dealing with "movements between closed systems", Betrieb breaks down works from such early 20th century composers as Arnold Schoenberg and Charles Ives into blocks which are stacked obsessively and then knocked over again in the construction of "a complex, systematic acoustic space corresponding to 'L'expérience intérieure,'" as Ehlers put it in his sleeve notes. "Every track is created out of one source and the loops are layered in a dodecaphonic-like structure," he responds now, when asked to expand upon the idea of "closed systems". It may be the first application of 12 tone composition to sampling, but the structure is never evident. Instead, Betrieb – which translates as "business" or "activity" – sounds like an uneasy morass of granulated strings and fuzzy stutters, by turns Romantic and utterly alienating. Ehlers's own comments evoke these contradictions, interrupting a discourse on recombinant logic to proclaim unabashedly, "I'm always trying to produce the saddest music in the world. I used Schoenberg and Ives because they were the last composers to deal with a special kind of Romanticism, like in Verklärte

Nacht and Ives's *Fourth Symphony* – oh, it's too beautiful, I'm dying every time!"

Ehlers's work in Autopoesies, and with Stephan Mattheu on Heroin, similarly concentrated on the framing and juxtaposition of extracts from pop and 'serious' music alike. For a self-taught musician – "My musical training was record collecting," he says, though he admits he had gained passing familiarity with some instruments in school – the Frankfurt philosophy student has stayed surprisingly far from the digital DIY of so much software-based composition. Despite his admission that "I can read some scores, but it's difficult for me", Ehlers has begun exploring the use of graphic scores (in a nod to Cardew) utilising non-traditional notation. Indeed, he's currently composing *Miander*, a piece for an exhibition called Frequencies, to be held next year at Frankfurt's Kunsthalle Schirn.

As if these activities weren't enough, he also teaches music and digital art at the school of fine arts in Saarbrücken with Stephan Mattheu, and at the Merz Academy in Stuttgart. Finally, Ehlers works as a video artist and runs the Whatness label with Markus Weiseck, tracing "the borderline between contemporary art and music". A current work in progress, *The Kiss*, reflects his interest in closed systems: three couples sit at a series of tables, framed head-on by five cameras, and walk through an intricately choreographed 'musical chairs' game of changes and actions, such as chewing gum, reading Jane Austen and, of course, kissing. Based on "the complexity of human behaviour", it reflects the veiled humanism at the core of all Ehlers's work. The other topic grounding his *Plays...* series, he says obliquely, "is emotional complexity. The five [artists cited in the series] were all involved in special kinds of 'resistance', and they did it in a very complex, emotional way. I've been working on this series for one and a half years now, and I've thought so much about it, it's difficult for me to express my thoughts. Maybe just listen?" □ Ekkehard Ehlers Plays Albert Ayler and Plays John Cassavetes are out now on Staubgold. Ehlers and Stephan Mattheu's *Heroin* is on Staubplast. Websites: www.autopoesies.de and www.whatness.de

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William Winant

Drumming up support. By Richard Henderson



When Lou Reed said, "My week beats your year", he could just as easily have been describing the diary of William Winant, the percussionist set to nail Most Valuable Player status in the American New Music scene. Pausing to speak at his home in Oakland, California, he had just returned from a unique, architecturally inspired concert in Los Angeles. This, in turn, immediately followed his recent tour accompanying Sonic Youth on their ten-concert Goodbye 20th Century tour of Europe.

The LA recital was one of a series of New Music events staged at the Schindler House, the preserved West Hollywood studio residence of visionary architect Rudolf Schindler. The common thread was music which interacts with the unique acoustic properties of the poured concrete structure. Winant's sold out show, which drew an audience of artists, dancers and others spanning Southern California's artistic community, was a solo recital of James Tenney's percussion pieces – some electronically abetted, others purely acoustic – assisted by the composer. That set, as it turns out, was a logical progression from Winant's novel excursion with avant rockers Sonic Youth. Winant co-produced 2000's commemorative set Goodbye 20th Century (SYR), in which the group covered compositions by Christian Wolff, John Cage, James Tenney, Pauline Oliveros, Steve Reich and Fluxus composers George MacLennan and Yoko Ono. The drummer then joined the group this last spring for the aforementioned continental excursion devoted to the Goodbye 20th Century project.

"One of the pieces that I did down in LA was one of the pieces that I did every night with Sonic Youth," Winant remarks, "an arrangement of a solo Jim Jarmusch piece, *Having Never Written A Note For Percussion*. I usually do it as a solo going piece, but when we did the record I arranged it as a group piece for Sonic Youth, Jim O'Rourke and myself. It became the opener for every concert on the tour. By the time I got to LA, I had that one under my belt, as we had

already performed it several times."

In addition to Sonic Youth, Winant and Jim O'Rourke, guest musicians at each tour stop were invited to sit in on Cornelius Cardew's *Treatise*. Winant recalls, "In Ghent, Belgium we picked up Fredie Rzewski, a friend of Cardew's who had participated in the premiere of *Treatise*, thus adding a historic aspect to the piece. Musicians from The Ex sat in with us in Holland." Winant, O'Rourke, Thurston Moore, Lee Ranaldo and Steve Shelley participated in a recording session during the Holland stop, organised by Terre and Luke Ex, bassist and guitarist of The Ex respectively, with percussionist Han Bennink and Dutch musicians Walter Wierbos on trombone and bass clarinetist Ab Baam. The results are slated to appear on The Ex's label Fishtank.

The tour lasted a fortnight, with concerts in Amsterdam, Zurich and Paris, three shows in Bologna, Rome, and in London at the Royal Festival Hall, where guests included vocalist Laetitia Sadier from Stereolab and Susan Stenger, from Band Of Susans, (on electric flute). As part of Sonic Youth and co's tour, two shows were strictly rock affairs, on which Winant also played. "We incorporated some of the rock songs into the 20th Century show, songs that were influenced by those composers or used sounds or techniques involved in those pieces, showing how (contemporary music) techniques transfer into Sonic Youth's songs, especially those on their last album, *NYC Ghosts And Flowers*."

Reviewing over six months of near continual performances, William Winant notes a celebrity encounter seemingly at cosmic odds with the academic bent of the Sonic Youth tour. "Kim Gordon was interviewed in London by Anita Pallenberg for a zine that she's doing. We had dinner and hung out with her. She was truly interesting and intelligent." Though he hadn't seen Pallenberg's appearance in Roeg and Cammell's 1969 film, *Performance*, since his high school days, Winant admits, "I went out and bought a copy."

Other recent projects have included the late summer release (on Web Of Mimicry) of the third, Winant-enhanced album by Secret Chiefs 3, the side project of Mr Bungle's guitar player Trey Spruance and violinist Eydind Kang. On the not too distant horizon is what Winant describes as "A big project with Alvin Curran – I'll be recording with him, Fred Frith and Joan Jeanrenaud. It's a big dance piece, commissioned by the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company and written for cello, bass marimba, guitar and bass guitar."

Least one should forget, the Abel-Steinberg/Winant trio continues its forays into the darkest heart of modern composing. The trio will be part of a recital with Californian composer Terry Riley at Washington DC's Library of Congress in 2002, playing Riley's *Trio For Violin, Piano & Percussion*. Winant may perform Riley's guitar and percussion pieces in tandem with the composer's son Gyan. Upcoming trio performances involve specific works written for them by, variously, Tawaray's Bun-Ching Lam and Wadada Leo Smith.

But Winant is most excited about two new projects he's involved with on the Tzadik label. He has just finished mastering a new Christian Wolff album, which he co-produced along with Tzadik's proprietor John Zorn. The disc includes *Burrocks*, performed at San Francisco's Other Minds 6 festival in 2000, on which Winant played alongside guitarist Fred Frith, cellist Joan Jeanrenaud, Bob Ostertag, Gordon Mumma, Miya Masaoka and Wolff himself. Also due later this autumn is an album of Gordon Mumma compositions, which will feature all of the former Cage collaborator's electroacoustic music. Spanning the 60s through the 80s, the disc contains a four-handed piano piece with Robert Ashley as one of the pianists, abetted by Mumma's electronics. Musing on the scope of Mumma's accomplishment, Winant comments, "I think it's going to be a terrific record. All the pieces have been remastered. Some have been on other records, but all have been out of print for some time." □



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Satlah

Last Exodus to Brooklyn. By Julian Cowley

"I could go anywhere," proclaims Danny Zamar. "I'm trying not to limit myself to one musical direction, to say, 'This is what I do.' But on the other hand I'm trying to do whatever feels really natural and closest to the truth." Alto saxophonist Zamar's quest for musical truth took him from his native Israel to New York in 1998. There, he attracted the attention of John Zorn, who invited him to record for Tzadik. Two albums have followed on the Radical Jewish Culture wing of the label (Satlah under Zamar's own name, and Exodus by his group Satlah), both of them supporting Zorn's view of Zamar as an exciting young player with a distinctive voice. Both recordings feature his satnah, combining his agile and driving voice with the bass of Shani Ezra Blumenkranz and the drums of Kevin Zubek. Zamar values the trio format because "It gives you a lot of freedom, yet it feels like one unit. A quartet is, like, four people playing together. The trio is very different; it's like one thing, not three different people."

Satlah recently brought their exhilarating blend of musics to Europe, playing in Poland, Italy and France, and recording a session for the BBC. Guiding Zamar's musical development through such shaping experiences is his sturdy spiritual faith. "I don't say 'I do this, I do that' – it's what G-d has given me, that's what I have." The peculiar alchemy of Satlah dissects a passion for post-bop jazz and a profound commitment to Jewish cultural tradition. As individual musical personalities, Blumenkranz and Zubek are important to Zamar's sense of his own identity, but he stresses that continuous development is vital to them all. "I'm 22. We're still learning and growing as people. The place that we were on the first record and the place that we

were on the second record are very different, and it has a lot to do with personal changes. Even things that don't have anything to do with music I can hear in there. You never go back to where you were before. You may think the same, but you're in a new place." Exodus, the second Satlah album, which was recorded in a live setting, has more of New York's edge and bustle in it. For Zamar the November 2000 performances were "a very strong experience. We'd matured and figured out more what we want to do."

Nothing is written in stone, however. He may prefer to keep all future paths open, but Zamar has a clear perception of his route to the musical present. After dabbling with piano and violin, and being told by his mother, also a musician, that a drum kit would not be welcome in their home, he opted for the saxophone around ten years ago. Lessons with Dino Ben Gur, now also a New York resident, proved crucial. A teacher Zamar liked and respected, Gur introduced him to Charlie Parker's music. "I always say that whatever I know about the saxophone I know from Bird," he confesses. When Zamar progressed to study in the jazz department of Tel Aviv's performing arts high school, he drew upon Parker and Monk for audition material. Eric Dolphy was his next major enthusiasm and before long he was immersed in John Coltrane, whose towering figure still casts a long shadow across his thinking. "I had an intense Coltrane time," he says. "I guess every jazz musician has. There's really nothing like Coltrane. You can hear it in a second. You can't say a bad thing about Coltrane." He also acknowledges the importance of Ornette Coleman, John Zorn's Masada and, more surprisingly, guitarist Pat Metheny. "You can

say you don't like it stylistically but there's something there. He's trying to really play, that's what I like about him." The jazz scene in Israel is, Zamar says, small but vibrant, characterised by stylistic diversity, open-mindedness and a very high level of musical creativity. Still, "The usual tendency is to go West", and a lot of other fine Israeli musicians have found their way to New York. Just as he did back home, he still occasionally plays Jewish weddings, supplying "background music for the chicken". He values the opportunity to deepen his contact with Judaism and the discipline of playing to order, which feeds into his music. "It builds you, it strengthens you," he says.

Exodus includes the trio's reading of "Heser Hamemunah", a traditional piece derived from Yemen's Jewish community. "We recorded a demo before the first album," he recalls. "At 4:30 in the morning, when we'd finished, Shani said, 'Let's do something with just darbukka', the little drum he plays, and 'saxophone'. I was ready to go to sleep but I said OK. It just happened. This song which I used to play in Israel..." Itarks back to Israeli weddings where Zamar performed as a member of a Yemenite group. In his original compositions too, Middle Eastern elements savour his jazz ingredients. "Let's start a Middle Eastern band", he clarifies. "What happened is that I'd sit at the piano to write a tune and something Middle Eastern would come out. It started while I was in Israel but it really got strong when I came to New York. I gave a demo to Zorn and he said, 'I'm so happy you chose Jewish tradition – it moved me'. I didn't even choose it. It just happened. I thank G-d every day for it." □ Exodus is out now on Tzadik

Bitstream

New York HipHop crew The Coup immediately withdrew the artwork for their forthcoming album Party Music on Big Apple label 75 Ark, following the World Trade Centre disaster. The image, created by Coup mainman Boots Riley, depicted the two towers on fire in a tempestuously accurate premonition of the event. Riley, who stated that the artwork was conceived in May of the year and completed the following month, promised the album would be released with a new cover image, commenting, "The original intent of the cover was to use the World Trade Centre to symbolise world capitalism and was not supposed to be realistic in its depiction although there is an uncanny similarity." In July, during recording sessions for the album, Riley told the *Portland Mercury*: "I definitely think that people should have democratic control over the world's resources, and that would be called communism. What we have now is a few people who control the resources, and the rest breaking off crumbs to light fires." The album will now come out on 5 November. More info can

be found at www.75ark.com >> Amid the terrible events of mid-September, we also heard equally shocking, but unconnected, news about Gary Todd, head of Los Angeles-based Cerdical Foundation label. He sustained serious injuries after falling headfirst from the third story window of a friend's apartment in Malibu, where he was resting a room he required 11 hours of emergency surgery to reconstruct part of his skull. The Cerdical Foundation has recently done sterling work in releasing work by Horace Silver, Cornelius Cardew, Terry Riley and more, and we wish him well >> Derek Bailey has quietly begun a series of CD-R releases as an aside from his Inous label. The cottage industry discs will have minimal artwork and may be low quality, but of definite historical interest. The first two in the series are: "The Appleyard File", described as "Things you might like to know about Charlie Appleyard" (writing on who he would be good for starters), and Dylots – "a collection of talking/playing pieces by Ornette Coleman from different times and of varied provenance". Costing £30/\$15, including postage, the discs are available from Inous, 14 Oval Road, London E8 8OS. UK >> Lydia Lunch teams up with Arabian Lights on *Les Chansons Des Pervers*, a collection of versions of "horny little tunes" put out by those crazy cats at Germany's Crippled Cock Hot Wax! label >> Minimasters is a

new television series of 13 half hour films, featuring collage/prints between Disc and video jockeys, to be shown on British television throughout October. These exclusive DJ mixes have come from independent labels like Pork, Full Cycle, Passpartout, Hospital, Neu!Tone, Batchit & Scaper, Law & Order and Hydrogen Dose, and visual crews include: Orbital collaborator Giles Thakrar, D-Fuse, Reality Check and the initiators of the project, Addictive TV. The latter pause their Speeded Out tour during October with an audiovisual passe through Coladot, EBN's Brian Kane and Fructose. Dates are: Brighton (29 September), Derby (6 October), Sheffield (7), Leeds (8), and Glasgow (6 November). Info: www.addictivetv.com >> ROR/R. Neil Cooper, the man who set up the longrunning *RawR* label in New York, died on 13 August. Friends said Cooper "spent over 20 years working, sweating, breathing, blending ROR". The label released such documents as Television's *Blow Up* tape and *Salad's Hot Alive*, as well as live and studio recordings of many of the globe's most influential non-mainstream acts, from Einstürzende Neubauten to Yo La Tengo, Bad Brains and more. ROR will release, with a new address: P O Box 501, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012, USA. Info: www.ror-usa.com.

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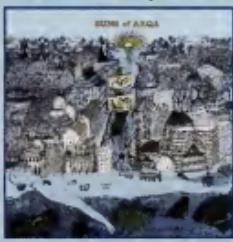
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Global Ear: Beirut

A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month: Joseph Ghosn hears the sound of DIY emanating from the rebuilt Lebanese capital



Middle Eastern promises: Hassan and Wael Kodeih of Aks'Ser (left) and Soap Kills

Viewed from the window of a plane, Beirut glows faintly, standing out as a gigantic and fragile urban web, attached to the Mediterranean shore and slowly spreading across the rest of Lebanon. The city is a fascinating landscape, full of contrasts and contradictions. On the same block stand newly erected shiny buildings and battered, wrecked houses, still displaying the scars of the war, bled to death by bombs and rockets. The clinically clean architecture that's slowly replacing the older, wrecked buildings, make Beirut look like a ghost town, slowly fading away, with all of its roots and history erased. These days, there isn't a Lebanese soul willing to discuss the past or to reflect upon the war years. The shorter the memory, the better.

At night, Beirut goes a little crazy. In the Rue Monot, neighbourhood near the centre of the city, a cluster of new, cosmopolitan bars and restaurants that wouldn't be out of place in Paris, New York or London become crowded with restless young people, high on hardcore Techno and Euro dance beats. Except that this club music hybrid has been updated and blended with cheezy Arabic vocals to fit local tastes.

Confronted with the dictatorship of chart-friendly music – which is happily dominated by your usual friendly major companies, all of whom are well established in Lebanon, but seek only to produce commercial tunes or classico-flavoured Arab folk – experimental musicians find it difficult to work and develop a genuine music. Faced with a lack of rehearsal spaces, rejection from record companies and a very limited number of venues to perform in, certain aspiring musicians have instead embraced DIY computer music. It is very easy in Beirut to get hold of a cheap PC loaded with pirated software: a five dollar bill can get you a CD-R with the latest versions of Logic, Cubase or Reaktor programs. Music geeks and freaks have thus been making their own blend of Lebanese bedroom electronica, available on privately pressed CD-Rs, in tiny editions that pass within circles of friends and artists.

Typically, these tracks are raw, made of unpolished

blasts of noise, fat beats, chance harmonies, fucked-up pop structures and Ambient soundscapes. Ziad Saad's *I See Blue* is a three-song EP which sounds a bit like a crazed take on primitive blues filtered through distortion and fed to a glitch loving, tongue-in-cheek machine. Listening to it is like hearing some new kind of intermediate language, made out of the hassles and strains of the English and Arabic accents mixed together. This is, perhaps, a genuine Lebanese gesture, as Lebanon has always found pride in its mixture of cultures.

Saad's rawness echoes in the music of local Hip-Hop group Aks'Ser, who recently played a storming performance in Beirut's newly opened Virgin Megastore. These four young men, in their very early twenties, cut their way through a set made of rude beats, noisy guitar licks and sporadic Arabic samples. Their showcase ended in a furious explosion of pure noise, which made a few ears cruelly bleed. Marzouk would have blushed... Aks'Ser's Lebanese rapping reflects upon the current misery of the Lebanese people, and the group's own dissatisfaction as individuals. "I am a survivor of the war", "Nothing to do/Nothing can be done", sings mainman Wael Kodeih. "There are so many social problems that it is no problem to find issues to talk about in our songs," he says bitterly, when we meet a couple of days after the show. Aks'Ser's first EP, recently released, has been recorded and mixed in part with the help of local legends Soap Kills, a duo active for six or seven years, having started as a post-Grunge outfit and quickly relocating to more electronic territory. Their music revolves around singer Yasmine Hamdan's sexy scatting and sun drenched lazy moans, and Zeid's pastoral beats, chopped out of his Groovebox or PC.

Their version of cult Egyptian singer Asmahan's "Ya Habibi Taala", recorded on their CD *Live At Circus*, is a fragile marriage of Arabic chants, abstract beats and stanced hard bop. This particular record manages to be wild, short, wet and minimal. A very raw (and rare) artefact whose sleeve states: "This concert was

interrupted by an Israeli airstrike on Lebanon, inflicting civilian casualties and severe damage to the electrical infrastructure." One of Soap Kills' early videos was shot in an old abandoned train, used during the war as a military court (the accused were rapidly prosecuted in the first wagon, shot in the second and acid-burned in the third). After releasing their debut album, which comes across as a *tit-for-tat* between Stereolab and Portishead, Soap Kills are currently trying to settle in France. A true loss for the country, most say.

Still stuck in Beirut, and not too happy about it, is a young man named Charbel, whose various solo electronic projects are named Echo and La Chambre. A guitarist at heart, he also plays with The Scrambled Eggs, a space-rock outfit that, sadly, is forced to play trad rock in pubs and bars just to have the chance to play at all. Listening to his latest private recordings was most devastating. It reminded me of early Ambient Aphex Twin, crossed with a lo-fi take on Syd Barrett. Still in his early twenties, Charbel has barely been out of the country. His first trip was to Paris earlier this year. Now he longs to return to France. "Beirut depresses me and Paris depresses me also," he confides. "In Paris, however, I feel able to make a few things happen, which is impossible around here."

Even though most of these young, aspiring musicians find life pretty uncomfortable in Beirut, there are others arriving from outside Lebanon who have found things much to their liking. Seeing Tunisian oud player and ECM artist Anouar Brahem play in the ancient city of Baalbek, in the Bekaa Valley not far from the Syrian border, was a total joy. In the middle of Roman ruins, under the shadow of the Temple of Jupiter, his playing was mesmerising while, above his oud chords, his ghostly moanings slowly echoed through the night, above his oud chords. An hour into the concert (an oud-percussion duo), upon hearing the muezzin's faraway chant, Brahem stopped playing to gently listen to the prayer that arrived as a distant answer to his peckings. A true epiphany that acted as a warm reminder: in Lebanon, there's still some magic hidden in these old stones that have survived so many wars. □

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Every month we play a musician a series of records which they're asked to identify and comment on – with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear



Richie Hawtin

Tested by Liz Copeland

Born in 1970 in Oxfordshire, England, Richie Hawtin moved to Windsor in Canada with his parents at the age of nine. The record collection of his audiophile father, a robotics engineer at General Motors, provided him with much of his teenage listening: Tangerine Dream, Kraftwerk, early computer music and sci-fi soundtracks. Windsor is just across the river from Detroit, and the young Hawtin spent much of his teen years gaining access to the Motor City's fledgling Techno clubs. Aged 17, he started to DJ at such influential venues as the Shelter and Music Institute alongside Derrick May, Juan Atkins and Kevin Saunderson, where he became obsessed with their relentless machine rhythms.

In 1989, he formed the Plus 8 label with long term colleague John Acquaviva, and first gained attention with his *Artificial Intelligence*-friendly FUSE project. But his notoriety only really started spreading after he adopted the name of the comic book character Plastikman, and released the Acidic Sheet One album (*Novamute* 1993), complete with artwork that was often mistaken for LSD tabs. After 1994's *Musik*, Hawtin was propelled into a life of constant travelling to club engagements all around the world. In 1996 he initiated his Concept series of abstract electronic 12", ushering in a phase of even more brutally stripped down and cavernous Techno, which continued on projects like Plastikman's *Consumed* (1998) and his new *M_nus* label.

His latest record, just released on *M_nus/Novamute*, is *DE9: Closer To The Edit*, a collection of 300 loops from Basic Channel, Baby Ford and Thomas Brinkmann, among others, reduced through several layers of deconstruction. It is also the most adventurous, melodic, soulful territory on which Hawtin has yet ventured. The Jukebox took place in Hawtin's office/studio in Windsor.

STUDIO 1 (AKA MIKE INK)

"GRÜN"
FROM VARIOUS STUDIO 1 (PROFAN) 1986

I'm waiting for a change... Oh, there you go! It sounds like Mike Ink or something from the Köln posse. That very minimalist Köln approach with a very clean digital sound, but still with the warmth of analogue. I don't know exactly how they're recording their stuff, but a lot of the Germans, like Pole, have this hi-tech digital sound but are still capable of infusing it with some type of funkiness, some type of analogue warmth and soul, which a lot of people miss when they get into the digital side of things.

It's Mike Ink: a track called "Grün", released anonymously as part of his Studio 1 series. Some people compare you and Mike Ink.

Mike Ink and I have a strange history. We both started out in the early 90s. We had similarities back then because we were both really, really into Acid House. We both were experimenting with the 3D3 sound and trying to take Acid House one step further. He seemed to get tired of it at the same time that I was getting tired of it. We both suddenly, around 1996, came back on the scene and tried to redefine ourselves. He had been working with his Proton releases, and then came up with the longform Studio 1 project with just colours and very little information. At the same time, I came up with the Concept series. We hadn't really had any dialogue about it between each other; it just kind of happened. When we see each other now, we talk and laugh about it. We've both always been trying to find a balance in our music. And we've always tried to have a progression in our music. Perhaps we both have short attention spans or something!

I find the music really interesting that he releases through his Komplakt label, whether it's playable as a DJ or not. He's a well-rounded artist. Mike does things like [Studio 1] and then does things like [the more Ambient] Gas... He goes all over the place. Those are the kind of artists I like. That's the kind of artist, hopefully, that I am, that people perceive me as. I'm interested in all areas of electronics, and I guess he is too.

TONY CONRAD

FOUR VIOLINS (EXTRACT)

FROM EARLY MINIMALISM VOLUME ONE (TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS) 1994, RECORDED 1987

It sounds really familiar.

It's Tony Conrad, originally from 1964. This represents a different, more reflective kind of minimalism, whereas you've often focused on a 'mess with your head', 'get up and dance' approach. Yes, at certain points. Not always. I don't know what *Consumed* would be considered... I guess all my music is 'mess with your head'. It's all coming from that perspective of a DJ trying to create some type of experience. But isn't all music trying to do that in the end? It sounds like bagpipes.

It's violin. He did this for two hours and then stopped recording once he noticed he was falling out of tune. It reminds me a little bit of some of the music from the Philip Glass movie soundtracks, with the slow driving development... It's a music that really is about slight variances and fluctuations of frequencies, in beats or delays and structure. That's what I've always liked about minimal music. I don't think of it as minimal, but well balanced – something which takes a number of listens to totally get into. Or perhaps you can get into it on the first time, but with each additional listen, you notice another component of the sound. Slight things that were in the background that perhaps you didn't hear the first time. I think that's part of the attraction of that type of music to me. Having that space there

that's not too cluttered and suddenly realising it's something that you hadn't heard before. It just depends on how you listen to it and what circumstances you listen to it in. It's just a really fine line of what's necessary and what's unnecessary.

HERBIE HANCOCK SEXTET

"RAIN DANCE"

FROM SEXTANT (COLLECTABLE LEGACY) 1972

This is cool... It's like going to see Miles Davis in a jazz club in Logan's Run! There are definite space age aspects to it. You hear the jazz. You hear the funk. And you hear the space – in both ways.

It's Herbie Hancock. It's from 1972's *Sextant*, with use of complex time signatures, drum machines and electronics. It was one of those records that horrified jazz purists at the time.

It seems that there was a group of early electric jazz pioneers that didn't really care that they sometimes alienated their own crowd by pushing their audience to try to bridge into new ways of recording and playing. Part of that challenge is what interests me in music. Sometimes you do things because they just haven't been done, or perhaps they haven't been done in a way that you think is correct. With this type of track, there is also an idea of bringing a number of musicians together and using anything that's available at that time to re-evaluate how those musicians interact together and how they play together. It's similar to what I'm doing with the new record. *DE9* is based on sampling, putting records and loops together. The Art Of Noise did it; the early Hip Hop guys did it scratching records. I've updated that with the technology that's now at hand and taken a slightly different perspective on it.

That's why I've always been involved and interested in electronic music, because there always seem to be these possibilities popping up. Perhaps it was only in my own head that traditional music was never that exciting, because it seems too set in its ways. Perhaps it wasn't like that in the 50s, 60s and 70s. When I became interested in music in the 80s, things had really become pigeonholed and solidified. Electronic music didn't seem to have so many parameters and reference points.

It's closely tied to technology, which is continually advancing.

Exactly. This isn't what some of the jazz purists wanted to hear. They were just looking for a continuation of jazz as they knew it. From what I know, jazz has always been a music that evolves... Improvisation is also about creating something new, and on the fly. And that's exactly what electronic music and Techno are about.

FRONT 242

"BODY TO BODY"

FROM NO COMMENT (EMI) 1984

Front 242? [Laughs] I caught that one in two seconds! Before I even heard the voice, I was going to say Art Of Noise, because of the drum sounds. The very early, digital 707-type drum sounds. Front 242 were a big influence on me, for sure.

Sometimes when people ask about influences there are so many that you sometimes forget a few, but until someone plays it in front of you. Around that time, I had all the Nitzer Ebb and Front 242 records. In the early 80s, when I was getting into electronic music, what was going on around here was that cross between alternative, electronic and Nu-Beat. It's what bridged me into the sparseness of Detroit Techno. Front 242, Nitzer Ebb, Sealed Heads, even Skinny Puppy. There's not much going on here, it's quite stripped down. Bassline, drums, vocal – and that's it. Very menacing, very youthful. Front 242 had some really experimental pieces on their early

Invisible Jukebox

albums and on the B-sides of their 12"s. They became quite popular later on, but there's a lot of early sampling technology, too, in these old tracks. Looping weird vocals and movie snippets and things like that.

MORTON FELDMAN

"ROTHKO CHAPEL, SEGMENT 5"

FROM ROTHKO CHAPEL/WHY PATTERNS? (NEW ALBION) 1991, RECORDED 1991

This sounds familiar, too. I probably don't know it though.

This is composer Morton Feldman: a piece composed for the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas. You have often talked about American abstract expressionism being a deep influence on your own music...

Only hearing a small snippet of this, it seems to make sense. Whenever I'm in Houston I go to the Chapel for a bit. It's the best place I've been on the planet for a genuine Rothko experience. The Tate Gallery with the original Rothko room in London was a great Rothko experience, but nothing comes close to the Chapel. Of course, for *Consumed* and a lot of my work ever since, becoming more introduced to the art scene, getting involved with the millennium celebration last year, it's another challenge for creating something new. Finding inspiration in different places.

I've always had an interest in the visual element. I originally come from a film perspective.... I thought about going to school for cinematography. When I used to listen to music in the 80s, as I got more and more into instrumental music, not only for the technology and computer aspects of the music. It was also the idea of getting away from the vocals that seemed to make more sense to the way I used to listen and think about music. Even when I used to listen to early New Order instrumental pieces, I always saw pictures in my head: thinking about how the music looks, and how the art sounds - something that goes through my head a lot. When sitting in the Rothko Chapel or seeing a [sculpture by Anish] Kapoor, the opposite reaction runs through my head: how does this interact with the sound? How can I create something new? How would this 'look'? This also comes from seeing and listening to things structurally. Maybe that comes down to the music that I'm involved in being minimal or balanced music. You start to see all the different components - now I'm saying 'see' and not 'hear' - as very individualistic things that inhabit the space you're creating.

Do you see any parallels between this and what you did at the La Beau^{te} mill^eum event in a medieval cathedral in Avignon last year?

The project in France was interesting because the basic theme was beauty, and how that definition of beauty has changed over time. A big thing for me was the idea that technology - including accidental technology - can be beautiful to us. You're in this structure that was very purposefully built, very handmade, which existed for hundreds of years. A kind of haphazard way of creating music started to come into my head. One of the pieces I put there was just the end of one of my records. I recorded something very on-purpose, put it on a record, and instead of just playing it back, I ended up playing back just a loop of the scratches at the end of the record. It became kind of the end, the continuum at the end of my recording. To some people, it would have been the ugliest, most unlistenable part of the record, but in some ways it had become the most beautiful part to me. It seemed to work in that context.

Did you find that having to use technology worked against the structure of the piece?

There was quite a lot of technology in the show. Bill

Viola was there, who is totally based in technology. There were the sound system pieces... It was important to me for technology to be as unintrusive as possible. I really didn't want it to be about the technology - I wanted it to be about the sounds that technology has created. To fill these rooms, those voids of sound - that would never have been possible or dreamed of when that place was created.

AUTECHRE

"PARHELIC TRIANGLE"

FROM CONFIDEL (WARP) 2001

[Listens for a bit] I have no idea who this is. It's present day.
Yes, I can tell that it's modern. Aphex Twin? Close.

Superquesprius?

Autechre, it's from their newest album, *Confidel*. It *never* ends at a melody, but stops just short. I find it really easy to follow. But I guess that while I consider a lot of my music to be musical, traditionally people would say it's very unmusical. To me, an interesting drum loop, or an interesting rhythmic pattern is just as musical as a collection of notes. I think that's what a lot of people are finally understanding and becoming aware of. Technology allows us to make a repetition of ideas that grow on you, but which isn't a typical selection of C sharp, D sharp, etcetera... I've met Rob [Brown] and Sean [Booth]. They're really nice guys. I definitely respect them for sticking to their guns and trying to move on with every album. They seem to put the finger up to everyone and continue with what they're doing, but without going up their own ass and being experimental just for the sake of being experimental. I was never really into that. I always like people who were willing to push their audience without completely losing them. That's a challenge in music and in art, taking people somewhere new while still speaking their language. Sure, it's impressive to walk into something completely off the wall, but people are just going to leave and say, 'Well, that was crazy.' I was shocked, but what they hell were they saying? What was the point? Try to bring the people along with you while expanding them at the same time.

BABY FORD

"DOOCHY COOCHY (KONRAD KADET MIX)"

FROM FORGOTTEN RHYTHM KING (1995)

Baby Ford! "Doochy Coochy". It was a really influential record around Detroit back in the late 80s. The late 80s? Yeah, fuck! I was first introduced to his music, without realising who it was, through listening to Derrick [May] on the radio, and probably Jeff [Mills, aka The Wizard]. It was a big influence on me. A great reaction to what Detroit was sending out. There was an initial wave from the first records that came from Detroit, Derrick, Kevin [Saunders], Juan [Akre], Eddie [Fowlkes] and all those guys - they sent out these waves, sounds and transmissions that inspired people. But I don't know if what we were doing back then at Plus B was inspired just by those direct soundwaves from Derrick and Kevin. Although we were inspired by what they created, we were just as inspired by what came out from other people being inspired. We were hearing the vibrations and also the reverberations coming back from Europe, and this album was a big reverberation.

This sounds closer to what you've done than any of what's come out of Detroit.

This was a big track at the Shelter. There were people who tried to take Detroit ideas and just imitate it. There were other people who took it, were inspired by it and put their own twist on it. This has a British

flavour but you can hear where it originally came from.... Peter Ford [laughs]. There are very few artists who I can say that I was listening to ten or 12 years ago who inspired me as much then as they do now, and in completely different ways. Peter has completely progressed. He went from Forlutor to going down the road of pop with his *World Of Baby* Ford album; then went completely back under the radar with [his underground Techno labels] Ifach and Trekl, and his Minimal Man project [with Ian Lovelady aka Eon]. Now [he's appeared] on Klang and Perlon. I expect him to be one of the guys that in 20 years, whether or not I'm still doing this or not, I'll be listening to his records, from present day to back then. He always seems to be one step ahead, always trying to progress and find out where he needs to go next.

GIL MELLÉ

"DESERT TRIP"

FROM THE ANARCHOMEGA STRAW OST (KAPP) 1991

[Listens for a while]
It's a soundtrack.

To what?

The *Andromeda Strain*, the 1971 science fiction movie, with music by former jazz musician Gil Mellé. Are you familiar with it?

Yes, but I don't remember this sequence. Is it one of those soundtracks that don't actually appear in the movie? [Observing the octagonal record and accompanying sleeve] This packaging is amazing. This has that late 60s, early 70s sound, for sure. Not just from the instrumentation but from the recording technique too. Being into film early on, I was always into science fiction films. When I got into electronic music, I definitely started to watch some of my favourite movies again and take even more note of the sound. *Wavelength*, *The Andromeda Strain*, *Logan's Run* and *THX 1138* were key films for me. *Forbidden Planet*, I believe, was one of the first analogue electronic movie scores. So it was a very important soundtrack. That angle has always come up through my music because, although I got it into me as the dancefloor and clubs, there was always that cinematic kind of love, both visually and sonically. It's taken me through these different turns in my career, things like *Consumed* and "Minus Orange". I'm surprised that you haven't yet made a soundtrack.

I've been in a couple of discussions over the years. It's something I definitely want to do, and it will happen at the right time. In recent years, there seems to be some development towards bringing an electronic soundtrack to a film with a style that would work. I thought [Daren Aronofsky's 1998 film] *Requiem* was really worked. It was a step in the right direction. Because a lot of film work is being digitised now, and the music is digitised, you're starting to work in the same realm, with similar programs, instruments and technologies. Now that these things have come together you can really come up with a sound and have it inspire a visual or an effect in the movie. And also take a computerised effect visually, send that through to something and get a sound equivalent. If you close your eyes and just hear part of the movie, you might actually see what you would see if you opened your eyes. It's the only movie I've seen that has been like getting close to that point. Now the perfect kind of soundtrack really is going to be electronic. People are starting to revisit the idea. What I've always been interested in, coming from both sides, is seeing what you're hearing and hearing what you're seeing and having those things come together and interact. They still seem to be two separate entities, but if we can bring them together closer, we'll have something much more powerful. □



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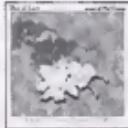


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A SHADOWY PRESENCE WORKING IN THE MOOKS AND CRANNIES OF NIMBHILISH, FIBBLER AND PHILOSOPHER HENRY FLYNT HAS SPENT FOUR DECADES ATTEMPTING TO RADICALISE THE HILLBILLY SOUND OF THE AMERICORN SOUTH BY WHITTLING IT INTO AN OPEN, FREEFORM, ECSTATIC TRANCE MUSIC. NOW, HIS KEY WORKS ARE RESURFACING AFTER 17 YEARS OF SELF-IMPOSED SILENCE. WORDS: MARCUS BORTH

AMERICAN

The devil's mith Henry Flynt in New York, 1975 (below) and today in his SoHo apartment



GOTHIC

"Is it OK to talk about what we think about this civilization?" asks 61 year old hillbilly minimalist fiddler and philosopher Henry Flynt, in his broad Southern accent, as we drink coffee in a restaurant in New York's Soho district, where he lives. "It's the aftermath of a wreck. It's just in a condition of destruction. I'm trying to think of a more polite word than putrefaction. Everything that is organic is dead and decomposing, and everything that's not organic is twisted and fused."

For 40 years, to almost complete indifference, Flynt has waged his own multi-front struggle against this culture, a struggle which has encompassed everything from music, dance and painting, to "concept art", a term which he coined in a 1961 essay, a broad range of philosophical treatises on everything from mathematics through psychedelics to utopian politics, and even a visionary 1975 commune called the Genius Liberation Project.

After decades of gathering dust, some of Flynt's key musical works are finally emerging. A two CD set, *You Are My Everlovin'/Celestial Power: New American Ethnic Music Volume 1*, issued earlier this year by Baltimore musician and impresario John Berndt, on his Recorded label, collects two of the extraordinary drone and violin "HESE" (Hallucinogenic Ecstatic Sound Environment) pieces he developed with Swedish composer, musician and mathematician Catherine Christer Hennix in the late 1970s after studying with raga master Pandit Pran Nath (see *The Wire* 211). Then there's the recent Ampersand release, *Graduation And Other New Country And Blues Music*, a set of avant Country recordings from the late 1970s, in which he places Country on an infinite plateau that constantly surprises, while remaining as American as a cross-country road trip. Awaiting release are unique overdubbed violin pieces from the 1960s, like "Hoodown", and recordings of his blazing cosmic rockabilly and freeform psychedelic guitar and drum collaborations with Hennix under the name Gharma Warner, made in the years before Flynt quit making music in 1984.

Asked whether he's a recluse, Flynt responds, "Not at all. In fact, how strange. I've been screaming for attention for 40 years. I have a long list of attempts to become a public figure. It just keeps failing over and over!"

A self-described nerd, Flynt grew up studying classical violin in North Carolina in the 1950s, surrounded by, yet oblivious to, the Southern "ethnic" cultures of bluegrass, Country and the blues. He studied mathematics at Harvard, with a view to pursuing philosophy, while continuing his studies of New Music. A meeting with La Monte Young in New

York in 1960 provided the blueprint for Flynt's future musical direction. Young was at that time simultaneously pursuing his work in modern composition while playing ferocious saxophone and gospel based piano pieces. Inspired by both Young and exposure to Indian classical music, Coltrane and Country blues, as well as his growing commitment to leftist politics (Flynt was a member of a Marxist group in the mid-60s, and has continued to pursue radical, utopian politics in his philosophical works), he began producing solo fiddle pieces that embody his revolt against the clinical modernism of Cage and Stockhausen (against whom he demonstrated in 1964 with fellow Harvard student Tony Conrad), and his allegiance to what he calls "new American ethnic music". This was the music of the South of his childhood, whose traditions he reshaped according to his own vision of an ecstatic, trance-inducing sound, appropriating techniques from contemporary composition to add to the armoury of ethnic music.

Flynt is at pains to differentiate his work from the superficial borrowings from ethnicity that are pervasive in modern music. "You can't just say well now I'm going to go to the dimestore, get some hillbilly software and throw some hillbilly into my minimalist modern music," he declares. "For me that's not what it's about. Since it's a different musical language, you have to acquire some chops. Just saying you're a composer and a musician and producing a violin and a piece of paper doesn't count for anything in that world of banjo pickers and fiddlers. What the pedal steel player is doing on my CD is sophisticated stuff!"

Setting aside his own formidable fiddling skills, Flynt acknowledges that finding other musicians with the resource chops who were willing to follow his instructions was never easy. For the 1975 Graduation sessions, Flynt recalls that he had to track the musicians into doing what he wanted. "It was always a fluke," he remembers. "You'd bring them into this situation almost blind, throw them into these open forms and ask them to start flying. What usually happened was that they managed to do it once. Afterwards, they shrugged their shoulders and walked away. One of them said that he had a great job lined up playing in a ski resort near Denver."

Flynt is aware of the paradox his music embodies: trying to play ethnic music for a community that is for the most part uninterested in his attempts to elevate or enrich it. He in turn says, "I have no interest in entering their world and becoming a commercial musician performing three minute songs. I've taken their music and ripped it apart at the seams to expand it, make it work in a different way."

Flynt has also occasionally brushed with the rock

world. In the mid-60s, he took guitar lessons from Lou Reed and sat in on violin for John Cale with The Velvet Underground for four nights in 1966, during the Exploding Plastic Inevitable period. "I enjoyed the experience, but I was kind of out of place," he admits. "We would get into long chaotic pieces, but Reed stopped me because my sound started getting too hillbilly. He actually punched me to get me to stop."

Through the late 60s, he pursued an electric guitar driven, political rock format, while in January 1975, he formed Novably, a rock 'n' roll outfit, who performed spited versions of the Communist "Internationale" along with their own songs – an exhilarating fusion of rockabilly riffing, free jazz and hillbilly fiddling. He recalls trying to get gigs at the downtown New York punk mecca CBGBs (whose initials stand for Country, Blue Grass and Blues). "Because of *Graduation*," he exclaims, "I thought that if anybody had a right to play there I did. But the club thought otherwise and blew him off. Six months later, punk hit town and his musicians jumped ship, leaving him with a lasting suspicion of a 'punk value system' which he considers pervasive. Flynt dismisses "alternative culture" as for the most part "a mystique of self-dissolution, hollowness and dishonesty, coming forth from this inchoate rage at the so-called establishment. This mystique is clearly not real. I mean someone who actually was all those things would just melt in their tracks if they were infinitely hollow, alienated. It's if they want to keep falling through the rotten floors of illusion forever. They affirm that as a state."

I ask him if he's interested in developing a different set of values. Flynt looks momentarily puzzled and replies, "You mean, start up a new civilisation? That's what I've been trying to do for 40 years, but there have been no takers." What, then, are his values? Musically speaking, in a key 1980 essay, "The Meaning Of My Avant Garde Hillbilly And Blues Music", he says he "aspires to a beauty which is ecstatic and perpetual, while at the same time being concretely human and emotionally profound". Virtuosity for its own sake does not interest him. He gives the example of Omette Coleman as another important influence. "Some major jazz musician said of him that he couldn't play a major C scale," he says. "Well, that's me. I don't want to play a major C scale. I want to be pushing and pulling, bobbing and weaving at all times." □ *You Are My Everlovin'/Celestial Power: New American Ethnic Music Volume 1* is out on Recorded; *Graduation And Other New Country And Blues Music* is on Ampersand. Flynt's philosophical writings can be found at www.henryflynt.org



salvation



hunters

The monumentally savage pairing of reborn electronic musicians Kevin Martin and Justin Broadrick have been plying their own brand of "deviant independence" for a decade now as Techno Animal, margin-walking music's windswept endzones. Their back catalogue is all over the map. It takes them from the pathological studio exorcism of 1991's *Ghosts*, where the throb of near-silence felt like the aftermath of an explosion, through dub, Industrial noise, and micro-electronica, to Wagnerian soundtracks, breakbeats and distorted rock. The slippery, multi-dimensional nature of their two-man oeuvre has meant that, until now, they've spent little time under the spotlight. This has only been compounded by a long list of messy interactions with various record labels, and Broadrick and Martin's absolute refusal to stay true to any one genre. Instead they've followed the ever fluctuating dictates of their soul. With their fifth album *The Brotherhood Of The Bomb* (Matador), which features collaborations with half a dozen underground rappers, among them Company Flow's E.P. and Sonic Sum, they have hit righteous paydirt. From the opening salvo of "Cruse Mode 101", screaming with the sound of contorted metal and divebomber electric bass while rappers Lumba and Meta-Mo of Rubberroom spit percussive quicksilver all over the top, it's pedal to the metal all the way. If this is HipHop, then it just grew itself a bloodshot third eye. "For me it's not a HipHop record," bursts Martin. "Partially it is because you have certain elements in there that are true to HipHop, but in the way that it goes beyond categorisation, it's a Techno Animal record."

"I mean, in one way you'd love to feel you're right in the middle of HipHop," he continues. "You're working with rappers left, right and centre, and adopting the codes and vocabulary, but that's not you and it's totally false to do that, so you're left twisting and contorting things to your own needs. It's difficult for anyone to exist with an individual sound – and it always has been – but I've never felt a part of any area I've ever worked in, and that's something that always winds me up, that there are required behavioural or song patterns in order to fit in somewhere. I think that's only true to a genre if you're looking at it as a sales commodity. The fire keeps burning within us, it doesn't feel right to be this or that, we're constantly trying to find something that reflects how we feel psychologically and that's what I always look for in music."

"We had to find our own voice and we found it through technology," picks up Justin Broadrick from his Matador hideaway, his voice booming through a crackling speakerphone in Matador's London HQ. "That was our mission, to go past the conventional acoustic instrumentation that we'd both been brought up with. We were fascinated with the possibilities of technology

but we wanted to mutilate it the same way we mutilated both rock and jazz respectively." Martin, seated across from me, nods emphatically with a fat grin plastered on his face. I have already spoken to him earlier and we have both adjourned upstairs to catch Broadrick on the phone. He nods appreciatively all through the call, as Broadrick restates virtually everything Martin has said downstairs, right down to what they listened to as kids. It's as though they were separated at birth. They both remain unrepentant music obsessives, asking if I've heard anything that's blown me away recently and raving about everything from David Sylvian through Keiji Haino and Mr Len. The same enthusiastic energy fuels their endeavours across a variety of musical forms. Besides Techno Animal, they have individually and collectively manifested no end of new noises, among them The Bug, a Martin-curated audio tribute to Coppola's *The Conversation* called *Tapping The Conversation*; Ici, whose dub rituals are some of the darkest entries in the duo's back catalogue; Broadrick's Ambient side-project Final; and Martin's collaborations with Sonic Boom's EAR, alongside My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields and AMM's Eddie Prevost. "It all comes from being enthusiastic," Martin beams. "I'm also a journalist, but for me all of these outlets complement each other. Justin and I want to plough our energies into as many different areas as possible." The fumoir Martin and Broadrick have been ploughing together goes back a long way.

Martin formed God in 1987, a monstrous jazz bastard with a barely controllable line-up of orchestral proportions, including two bassists, two drummers and two saxophonists, one of which was Martin himself. With a horn sound that was inevitably compared to large, warning mammals, Martin's earliest modus operandi was unashamedly straightforward: total aggro. "I have to be honest, there were times with God when I simply wanted to drive people out of the room in droves," he confesses. "I had a fight with someone for dancing to us. I thought they were taking the piss. Yeah, sadism was certainly interesting for a time." Martin's childhood, played out in the English south coast town of Weymouth, was similarly brutal. "It was just whiter than white down there," he recalls. "I hardly ever saw a black person and it was very violent due to the all the army and navy bases in the area. I wasn't lucky enough to have an older brother or some hip friends who could guide me in the right direction. I was an only child, watching my mother getting beaten up by my father if he wasn't hitting me, and I had to try and make sense of this or find out what was nonsense. And music was a catalyst for me in changing my whole life. So it's very romantic to me." I ask him if he still believes that art can change the world and he goes all red and starts giggling like a kid. "I do, I do," he laughs. "But it's all become such a commodity, all empty posturing and wallpaper, but it's potentially revolutionary. It changed my life. It touches and moves people mentally as well as physically, that feeling when your insides just heat up with energy and emotion. It's a beautiful thing."

Martin came up on punk rock, with anarcho groups like Discharge and Crass being particularly inspiring. At night he would lie on his bed with a stereo speaker clamped to either side of his head in an endearingly futile attempt to disappear inside the music. Still, he traces his most important influences to the early 80s and genre defiant groups like The Birthday Party, Pere Ubu and Public Image Ltd. "Getting a saxophone was important," he explains. "I wish I could say I bought it because of John Coltrane or Albert Ayler, but I bought it because of Theatre Of Hate and The Psychedelic Furs, both incredibly bad bands. At the time I was mixing with some friends who had a four-track and effects, and it

TECHNO ANIMAL'S SEISMIC BROTHERHOOD, JUSTIN BROADRICK AND KEVIN MARTIN, STRADDLE THE FAULTLINES BETWEEN DISTORTED ELECTRONICA, DISTRESSED BEATS AND UNDERGROUND RAP. WORDS: DAVID KEENAN PHOTOS: MATTIAS EK





seemed that everything at that time was just twisted and perverted. So we would slam the saxophone through effects, pitch it down, run it through a delay. I think that whole early 80s thing has indelibly marked my journey through music. Stuff like The Birthday Party, you didn't know where they were going. And at the same time you were listening to John Peel and you'd be hearing Misty in Roots or Prince Far-I. It was a real refresher from the mono-culture that was all around me."

Broadnick, meanwhile, had been playing guitar for Birmingham's fastest and loudest, Napalm Death. After serving time behind the drums for hardcore noise act Head Of David, he formed Godflesh with bassist G Christian Green. Godflesh were every bit as sociopathic as God, combining ultra-low gutbursting tunings with singing feedback and distant pungent vocal stabs on titles like "Spinebender" and their masterpiece, 1988's *Streetcleaner*.

"I made *Streetcleaner* when I was 19," Broadnick remembers. "I felt intensely nihilistic and I was just hitting out at everything, first and foremost myself. Music is my only language, a vehicle for both what I can and can't be. I find words and thoughts a bit much for me but music lets me be things I can't normally be. It transcends everyday mundanity. We're looking for thrills on every level."

"We're pretty poor emotional ciphers without music," Martin interrupts. "We suffer bad withdrawal symptoms, but it's more about the empowering nature of music. I don't feel the nihilism has gone but I've allowed myself to feel more emotion and escape from peer pressure. I can't say the music has become a calmative in any way."

The two met when Martin put on the first Godflesh show at his legendary Mule Club in Brixton, South London, where he'd been booking gigs by the likes of Napalm Death and Extreme Noise Terror. "Live, they didn't disappoint," Martin remembers. "However, we were both becoming interested in what a studio could do, both listening to a lot of dub and electronica. With God I was confined to working with people in a certain way, so many musicians and not enough channels on the desk. We'd be driving back from a God/Godflesh tour and Justin and I would be raving about Penderec or Morricone."

"Meeting Kevin got me into jazz," says Broadnick. "I realised I could be working on so many different levels. Godflesh was a very primitive thing but I still wanted to keep it pure, to keep it as it was intended to be. With Techno Animal we set out to transcend the confines of Godflesh and God."

Their debut, 1991's *Ghosts*, released on Martin's own now-defunct Pathological label is still a harrowing listen, most effective in the way it plays with silence, like the distant foghorns of "The Dream Forger". Elsewhere the riffs were still intact but the tracks were now assembled round clanking percussion and hideously warped samples. The closing "Spineless" is

the sound of a despairing scream extended through six and a half minutes. "It was a disturbing record," Martin admits. "Much more so than the stuff we had previously been doing. Much as we pick a million holes in it now, when we came up with it, it was a totally liberating experience. It was a direct reaction to the way we had been talked about in the press and all the shows we'd play where people would be shouting at us to turn it up. That's why *Ghosts* has tracks at the other end of the spectrum, near silence. We thought, 'let's play it more psychologically.'

Nevertheless, the reputation of their previous groups preceded them. Even today they're still fending off criticism that would have them as macho pit bulls, forcing the audience into submission with unwavering monomaniacal sonic assaults. Yet Martin speaks of his music in much more open terms. He talks of their live shows, where strobes and smoke interact with extreme volume, as attempts to liberate the listener from the moment, to pull them straight into the heart of the sound, to lose themselves completely. And the idea of ego-obliterating art as being somehow solely tied up with machismo is laughable – everyone knows femininity can be just as heavy. "I'm not interested in pure noise," Martin retorts. "The idea of just brutalising the audience is absolutely the opposite of what we want to do. Our live shows are almost like sensory deprivation but not to be sadistic about it. It's to allow you to absorb the sound in its purest sense, just the fact that people lose their inhibitions when they can't see the person next to them. That's our aim, to lose ourselves, anything but the fucking numbing neutrality of the everyday. And once you've heard this stuff you can't listen to anything else in the same way. Volume and bass is addictive like hot food."

A turning point in the Techno Animal aesthetic took place during a Mille Plateaux tour in the winter of 1997, where Techno Animal shared buses and billing with Atan Teenage Riot's Alec Empire, Porte Risers, DJ Rush and DJ Spooky. "It was a mad tour," Martin remembers. "We were unleashing some horrendous sounds and people were just flipping out and dancing their asses off – people who hadn't come across anything like it before. That whole effect of playing a club where the sound is geared towards bass and it's not some cheap ass sound system. It's been hired to hone music down to this purely physical entity. Having clubs that were open all night, that were brutally loud and had huge audiences that just wanted to flip to sound was a joy."

Something else that came out of the tour was a collaboration with ATW's Empire, a longtime fan of Techno Animal, on *Curse Of The Golden Vampire*. Attributed to Animal Empire, *Curse...* is a fantastic mess of overdriven breakbeats and roaring electronics. Empire was particularly taken with one of Broadnick and Martin's side projects, The Sidewinder's *Colonized* CD (1996). "Alec loved the extremity of production on that," Martin explains. "That's what he wanted. He asked us how to do that because he couldn't do it himself at that stage." *Colonized* is almost an electronic jazz record, with massed live saxes, guitars and bass all crunched through some heavy post-production. "It was us trying somehow to get away from the idea that electronic music was simply background music," Martin says, who incidentally curated an electronic/jazz compilation, *Jazz Satellites* (Virgin). "What I love about early 70s jazz records is the fusion of electronics and real instruments. These alien, hybrid sounds that result from people just trying to find their voice on these things."

At the time Techno Animal were being courted by The Beastie Boys' Grand Royal label. When negotiations

"WE FELL IN LOVE WITH A WHOLE VOCABULARY OF EFFECTS – REVERBS, DELAYS, DISTORTIONS. WE STILL LOVE THE MAGIC OF SOUND: WE LITERALLY SEE MUSIC AS A FORM OF SORCERY"

broke down, Empire's Digital Hardcore label stepped in with a figure to match Grand Royal's offer. "Suddenly we didn't hear from him," says Martin. "We're stupid enough to sit around and wait for these guys. The same thing happened earlier with Bill Leswell, who promised us a deal after our *Re-Entry* album. When we met, we thought they were genuine but it's got more to do with the business people they surround themselves with. It all came at a bad time. I was suffering severe depressions, Esarche had just dropped Godflesh and we didn't have a clue what to do. I'd also just spent three years working on the *Ice* record, *Bad Blood*, and it just felt like this Frankenstein folly."

Indeed, *Ice's* *Bad Blood*, on WEA subsidiary Morpheus, is a black hole of a record, though it's very much the blueprint for *The Brotherhood Of The Bomb*. Martin was rediscovering the joys of HipHop through Company Flow records like "Infolit", "Population Control". He called in E.P. New Flash For Old's Toastie Taylor, and Anti-Pop Consortium. "Psychologically I was falling apart at the seams," Martin admits. "I was fucking with the backing tracks, making it more of a dub album. The label hated it and dropped us; and a lot of the musicians still hate it. There was absolutely nothing radio-friendly about it. Still, without it we couldn't have made the new one."

The same "backs against the wall" frustration supercharges *The Brotherhood Of The Bomb*. "Hell" pairs thousand-yard breakbeats with air raid sirens and dälek's relentless rhyming, all fucked up with internal bass and distortion, while Toastie Taylor's vocals on "Prairie" crosses the primal evocations of The Art Ensemble Of Chicago with the streetwalking logic of Lee Perry. The whole record comes coated in a silvery layer of static that makes it sound like the music is fighting its way through a snowstorm of shortwave.

"A lot of this new electronica stuff is very sterile," Martin asserts. "Originally we were excited by drum 'n' bass, not the formulas but the desperation to find new sounds, new sounds that are very obviously energising, not alienating. During preproduction we just became obsessed by the textures of the sound, and we began to sample our own sounds over and over again; we fell in love with a whole vocabulary of effects – reverb, delays, distortions. We still love the magic of sound, we literally see music as a form of sorcery. That's a beautiful thing, whether it's on a primal level like the Jourouka musicians or whether it's Richter, Hawtin.

"For most of the rappers it was as alien an experience as it was for us," he continues. "People like Sonic Sum come from the opposite end of the spectrum. So it's challenging for them and I think that's what they got off on, the friction that comes from culture clash. But lyrically we didn't feel the need to talk to these guys. We trusted them and knew their stuff, so we would tailor tracks to what we thought was appropriate for their voices. Before we started recording there were various conversations, where we were talking of approaching KRS-1, Kool Keith and Chuck D, real formative influences, but it wasn't true to us. The hardcore mentality that we wanted was coming from people who were looking forward. People who were tearing shit up."

"But to be pissed off isn't enough," Martin concludes. "We wanted more, something that reflects the anger you feel to your core but also something that energises people. It's not a hammer over the head, it's self expression, intricate and intense, angry and deep." □ *The Brotherhood Of The Bomb* is out now on Metadisc. *The Bug's* *Seismic* EP will be released in November on Morpheus.



Hexes's missing aspnic ex-God Kevin Martin (opposite page) and Godflesh's Justin Broadrick (this page)

Unquiet soul





The staff at the *Cité de la Musique* look amused. Over the past few days, the rear lobby of the prestigious Paris music complex has been transformed into an exotic oasis called *Le Jardin Magnétique* (The Magnetic Garden). Artificial palm trees and cacti rise up from the floor, their trunks and stems wreathed with yellow-green cables. A motley group of visitors sporting cordless headphones make their way among them, picking up the sounds of lions, crickets and a host of unidentifiable creatures as they pass from one plant to the next. Stooping to listen to a cactus or a shrub, they are struck by the contrast between the artificial plants and the natural environs. Even more disquieting are the sounds themselves: they have little in common with the images of nature propagated by television and advertising. Meanwhile, the constructor of this meditation on artifice and reality, Berlin based artist Christine Kubisch, buzzes about putting the finishing touches to her installation. "This piece is about going back to the origin of something we've lost trace of," she explains. "I want to trigger reactions in people and get them to ask themselves about their own memories and experiences of natural sounds. The true and the false, what is virtual nature and what is real nature, is a theme I've been working on for many years."

Kubisch has been using sound and visuals to reconfigure people's perception of the world for more than 20 years now. One of the leading exponents of that once marginal activity known as sound art, she is only now beginning to enjoy wider recognition, as multidisciplined work becomes increasingly widespread throughout the art world. The approach has always come perfectly naturally to Kubisch however. "I was always in between art and music," she comments. "I never could make up my mind – and I don't think it's so unusual. People always have several talents, but from the beginning school tells you to choose just one discipline, and asks you to be so perfect in it that you don't even have the courage to do something different. When I started, I was really regarded as someone who could neither play music nor make visual art."

Today, Kubisch provokes markedly different reactions. In 2000 alone, she was invited to stage three solo exhibitions in Germany, including a 20 year retrospective in Rüsselsheim. She also participated in a number of group exhibitions across Europe, in Luxembourg, Berlin and Amsterdam, as well as London's Sonic Boom, curated by David Toop. This year's projects include works commissioned for Switzerland and Korea, as well as a series of installations in a new museum of light in Germany, based on the minute sounds emitted by neon and fluorescent tubes and other light sources. And now the American label Ampersand has just released two CDs of her collaborations with video artist Fabrizio Plessia. One is a reissue of their 1977 LP *Two And Two*. For this piece, the duo produced outlandish sounds on a variety of instruments and objects ranging from an accordion to a vibrator, while minute details of their performance – a hand movement, the tip of a vibrator touching strings – were filmed and projected live across a bank of video monitors, presenting the audience with onstage action and the video camera's subjective view of it. The video images of the duo's sound production were as hard to identify as the noises emerging from their filmed activity, making for an unusual and disorientating experience both visually and musically. The second CD, *Tempo Liquido*, features a taped collage comprising a steel drum and a cajón, overlaid by the sometimes heavily amplified sounds of a sheet of glass being rubbed with a thimble. "At the time we were really trying to create new sounds with whatever we could find," she remembers.

Kubisch has always been something of a musical outsider. Born in Bremen in 1948, she studied both

art and music, majoring in flute, piano and composition. But she soon realised that she did not want to play only music composed by others. She subsequently attended the Jazz Academy in Graz, Austria, and spent several years playing in the college's big band. "After that, I found out that I was not an improvisor either," she sighs. "I didn't have the talent a real jazz musician has to have." In 1974 she moved to Milan to study electronic music, only to find the experience just as unsatisfying. "In electronic music they had the same approach as in contemporary music," she says. "They were just interested in the sounds from their tapes and nothing around." Anarchic and open-ended, performance art was coming into its own in the 70s. It proved a far more appropriate outlet for Kubisch's yearning for new artistic experiences. Like their Futurist and Dadaist forebears, that decade's pioneering performance artists were seeking to upend the conventions of established art while breaking down the walls between the different disciplines. From 1974 on, Kubisch undertook solo performances integrating visual and acoustic elements. For *Emergency Solos*, she gave a series of flute recitals while wearing mittens, thimbles and even boxing gloves. *A History Of Soundcards*, which also dates from the mid-70s, was conceived as a reaction against the male-dominated Western musical tradition. A mordant, if capacious experience, it featured squeaking musical postcards bearing images of famous male composers from past centuries. A performance consisted of Kubisch presenting each card one at a time and squeezing it, while a prerecorded tape of squeaking card sounds played in the background.

Her collaborative performances with Fabrizio Plessi, with whom she toured Europe and the States through much of the 70s, were inspired by the same principles as her solo work. Sensitively seeking to break down the mystique surrounding the artist, the duo invited the audience to walk around the space during their shows. "I don't like being on stage and performing and having people sitting on the other side looking at me," comments Kubisch.

Throughout this period, Kubisch made many trips to New York to appear at such experimental venues as The Kitchen and Phil Niblock's Experimental Intermedia Foundation. She also got to make many contacts within the city's flourishing art and music scene. "I met a lot of people who were searching like myself for something different," she remembers. "Cage and Paik were very important to me because they too came from music and they had the courage very early on to move off in other directions. Women like Pauline Oliveros, Annette Lockwood and Laurie Anderson were likewise a source of encouragement, because we had no women composers in Europe. Actually, all the American scene influenced me because they were more open to experimentation than the Europeans." She also shared the Americans' interest in non-Western schools of thought. "I think we were all very interested in Oriental philosophies at the time," she concurs. "I did my regular meditation, not to the extent of becoming a Zen Buddhist, but it was always there. I also read all [philosopher] Rudolf Steiner's works. Even if he wasn't Oriental, he talked a lot about the inner vibration of sounds and considered that every sound had its own life. Of course, when you're looking for new things, you're experimenting on one hand with real objects, but you're also reading like hell to find answers to your questions."

Kubisch's greatest inspiration, however, was John Cage. She remembers, "Of course, when we met in the 70s he was considered this crazy sound guy, the one who made all these noises without any structure and couldn't compose. It was crazy, people hated him

so much." With her performances, particularly her flute pieces, eliciting a similar reaction, it's small wonder that she felt especially close to Cage. "People got so upset," she sighs. "That's why it was important for me to know about the Fluxus people and meet Cage. It was like being normal finally and not being out of everything." In 1982 Cage had organised the groundbreaking multimedia event at Black Mountain College in North Carolina that alerted the world to the wealth of possibilities opened up by the interaction of different artforms. Meanwhile his own work was challenging the composer's hegemony. "I liked his way of putting together many different actions and the fact that his pieces weren't ready-made," Kubisch says. "You had to make choices and take part in them. With my installations it's the same. You have to make choices in order to hear them, you have to move around and become involved. Then again, everything was predictable at that time in European music. For a flute piece, for instance, I would have to rehearse very hard for two weeks. But it didn't matter to Cage whether the result was perfect or not, what was important was that you had the experience." Cage inspired Kubisch to adopt a similarly non-interventionist approach in her installation work. "Like Cage, I allow chance to happen," she says. "For instance, I use solar cells in some of my installations and I never know what the weather will do. I leave it open – here are fantastic moments and boring moments."

By the end of the 70s, Kubisch was tiring of live performance. In 1980, she began studying electronics at the Technical Institute of Münich in an attempt to find more flexible methods of sound diffusion. It proved a liberating experience. "I didn't need any more instruments and people to play the music," she asserts. "I could really go on and experiment and although I didn't have much money to do so, there were so many little gadgets you could use."

Electronics freed her from the temporal constraints of live performance. Instead she could create spaces for visitors to explore in their own time. It also allowed her to map out complex, multifaceted ambiances and landscapes through the deployment of sound around the installation room. Kubisch was well aware how the visitors' perceptions of the soundwork altered as they moved around the space. "I have never liked the typical concert hall situation, where the audience is not allowed to move and can only listen from one point of the room," she firmly states. To evade the concert hall's structures she began creating her first sound installations. For *Il Respiro Del Mare* (1983), she developed her own magnetic induction system – essentially a sound apparatus without speakers consisting of two differently coloured wire reliefs installed on opposite walls, which visitors accessed by holding cube-shaped receivers to their ears. People in the vicinity of the blue wire relief intercepted sounds of ocean waves, while its red companion produced sounds of calm breathing. By moving between the two fields, people mixed these elements to customise their own sound environment. At this stage, sound installation was still in its infancy, despite the work of such pioneers as Max Neuhaus. "The term wasn't known back then," Kubisch explains. "People like Hans Peter Kuhn and Rolf Julius were starting out at the same time, but none of us really knew where we were going."

Kubisch went on to use and develop her magnetic induction system in many of her pieces. By introducing cordless headphones in works like *The Conference Of Trees* (1988-89), she increased the audience's freedom of movement, as well as improving the sound quality. Placing five bonsai trees around a conference table, she draped them with yellow-green electric wire, which transmitted sounds to anyone close

enough to pick them up. By moving round the table, visitors could blend the characteristic rustling of each tree and make them speak at the same time. Even as it conjured up a variety of humorous associations, the piece emphasised that natural phenomena are as deserving of attention as human activities. Like her other works juxtaposing nature and technology, *The Conference Of Trees* was also intended as a comment on the way technology invaded people's lives. "Of course, technology is taking over today and is being used as a substitute for human and natural activities," she warns. "So many people think that machines can do everything better than human beings and whenever you talk about nature, people consider you ideological or romantic, or even retarded. I try to go against that."

Kubisch's installations put everyday technology to creative use. She adapted her magnetic induction system from equipment originally developed for telephones. Since 1986 she has likewise been

exploring the artistic potential of ultraviolet light, which is normally used in museums or scientific research. "I like these lights because they reveal things you normally pass by," Kubisch enthuses. "When you shine an ultraviolet light on an old wall, for example, you see all the traces of its history. Like in my works on nature where I'm questioning what remains of real nature, the pieces where I use ultraviolet light, I'm questioning the history of the space and what remains of the original structure."

She has used the light to dramatic effect in pieces like *Sechs Sprünge*, an installation replicated in the Ludwigskirche in Saarbrücken in 1994, the sound component of which was issued as a CD by the Berlin-based Edition RZ label. Here she evoked the church's history by placing thousand year old slate slabs treated with a light-sensitive pigment along the organ gallery. Ultraviolet lights exposed their intricate surface structures, turning them into glowing lunar landscapes, while sounds of vibrating drinking glasses – whose pauses, repetitions and durations were determined by the church's architectural proportions – suffused the interior. Kubisch has always been drawn to the history and characteristics of particular sites, and the memories they evoke. "I am a post-war child and I played in the ruins of burnt down and bombed out houses all the time," she says. "Maybe that's why I'm interested in the atmosphere and aura of spaces."

In Kubisch's spaces, the aim is not to create synaesthetic associations between acoustic and visual phenomena, but to set up the conditions in which they reinforce and amplify one another. In *Twelve Ours And Twelve Sounds* (2000) she associated ultraviolet light with ultrasound to create a work that transcended the frontiers both of the visible and the audible. Loudspeakers illuminated by ultraviolet lamps mapped out a room's interior architecture, while ultrasonic generators created 12 separate soundtracks, whose frequencies were lowered by electronic control devices until they were just audible to the human ear. Kubisch explains, "When you lower these sounds just to the limit where you can hear them, they form a subtle web of sound that is there and yet not there. It's so strange, because every time you come near them, they seem to have disappeared and gone elsewhere. Some people say that they can feel them, even though they can hardly hear them. And they work very well with black light, because when you have a space lit with black light, you can't see where you are, and when you also have sounds you can't identify, it's even stranger."

In *The Clocktower Project* (1997) she used solar

Strategies against noise and tradition (clockwise from top left): a tree trigger at *The Conference Of Trees*; interrogating dead white trees during *A History Of Soundcards*; the giant tree at the retrospective retrospective one of Kubisch's *Soundcards*; ultraviolet ultrasonic trees from *Twelve Ours And Twelve Sounds*



energy, which she has been employing since 1991, to achieve an similarly dominating effect. The clocktower in question dominates the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, located in the old mill town of North Adams. Up until 1965, its bells regulated the working of its former occupants, a print works and an electric company. Kubisch combined the ringing of the bells into sequences by using a specially designed software program, which reacted to information about the intensity and position of the sun transmitted by a band of solar panels placed around the tower. The bell chimes she programmed to peal on the quarter-hour created patterns that varied according to the weather. Bright sunlight generated clear, distinct tones as opposed to the soft and blurred output on cloudy days. In this way her installation sensitised viewers to climatic changes by enabling them to "hear light", as she put it. For the older residents of the neighbourhood, meanwhile, it served as a reminder of the bell's history. "Some of them told me they got used to this new way of keeping time and really liked it," she beams.

Although Kubisch is best known for her installation work, she has also produced a number of non-visual pieces that testify to her abiding interest in environmental sounds, as opposed to music per se. "I enjoy listening to the sounds around me so much that I don't feel the necessity to listen to music regularly," she says. "I'm very sensitive to sounds – I can't just listen to them going by – so every time I listen to something it's a big effort." Like the compositions accompanying her installations, these minimalist pieces focus on the intrinsic properties of sound, such as colour and timbre. "Composing for me is very often just shaping sounds, rather than inventing new ones," Kubisch continues. "I might lower the pitch of a sound or change the time, and then I put many sounds together and make mixes." *"Old Sounds Archive* (1999), which appears on the CD accompanying the catalogue of the *Klangraumlichtzeit* (Soundspace/lighttime) exhibition in Rüsselsheim, is an imposing, elegiac piece made from bell sounds – the deep, resonant tones of church, ship-bells and others. "It's about all the old sound signals that everybody used to understand," she says. "It's a language that has been lost, but the sounds still have such a crazy energy and presence."

Nostalgico (1999), from the same CD, won a composition prize at a festival in Heidelberg. Here, taped creaking and squeaking doors and a live accordion playing a fragmented melody echo each other uncannily. As door sounds conjure a physical space, the nostalgic melody evokes the passing of time. Some of Kubisch's sound installations work well without the visuals. The *Sachs Speigel* CD in particular is a supremely satisfying listen. The fluid, ethereal whines of fingers rubbing the edge of drinking glasses combine in a fascinating, ever-changing interplay.

Like her music, Kubisch's installations are never jarringly or intrusive. "Because I had a classical training in music and visuals, I have a certain feeling for what is beautiful and I can't get away from it," she says. "I can't do very loud pieces, for instance, that's impossible for me." More than just "beautiful", however, they're frequently surrounded by a magical, enchanting aura. "I live in a big city and my life is a lot of stress, travelling, working, family and everything," Kubisch continues. "I never have a quiet moment and I'm nostalgic about being elsewhere, but when I get there I don't find what I'm looking for, and mostly it's just in my mind. So these spaces express our desire for a paradise we can't have."

At first glance, *Omnia Music* looks like a very elegant dinner table, but on close inspection it's apparent that everything is made of plastic, while the plates are really small, flat, white speakers playing different

pieces of music at the same time. "It looks very beautiful, but to listen to it is really hell!" Kubisch smiles. "That often happens in my work – it looks very nice, but after a while there's this question about what it really is. But then when you look at nature, you so often have places that look very nice, but after a while you realise that something is wrong: I had a residency last year at the Djerassi Foundation, which is one of the most isolated places in the Santa Cruz mountains, and every 15 minutes a big plane was crossing over, so you never had a quiet moment."

Silence – or rather its absence – is a theme that crops up in several of Kubisch's works. For her 1996 *Installation On Silence* she collected fragments of poems and prose on the subject by Goethe, Klee, Beckett and Rilke, among others. Her aim was to reveal the simple paradox: when silence is mentioned, it is always defined in terms of the sounds it evokes. Rilke, for instance, refers to the sounds of the wind and trees. These texts were printed with fluorescent pigment on sheets of plexiglass and placed beneath money testers whose ultraviolet lamps made the letters visible. Viewers could then go through the installation, asking themselves whether these descriptions were true or false – like someone testing the authenticity of a banknote. While reading these historical texts on silence, they could also listen to the incidental noises in the gallery, computer whirs and light bulb hums, in other words, the sounds which constitute our contemporary silence. "This was an important piece for me because it made me realise that there are always the sounds of computers, that's our silence today," she says. In some respects, Kubisch's views regarding technology's pervasive impact on daily lives echo those of Canadian acoustic ecologist and soundscape composer R Murray Schafer. "I have met him and studied his work and I think it's extremely important," she agrees. "He talks a great deal about listening, for instance. I listen a lot and I have also done some Deep Listening workshops with Pauline Oliveros about ways of listening to sounds. But Murray's views are very black and white: he's against any other noises besides nature. In many ways he's right, but I don't think it's helpful to tell people what they should and should not do. I want to make people aware of what's going on, that's my way of telling them. Instead of saying it's bad to have a computer and it's good to have a singing bird at home, I just say: 'This is a singing bird and this is the sound of a computer: which do you prefer?'" In her view, Schafer's ideas have had a considerable impact on Canadian artists working with environmental sounds, whereas their European counterparts tend to focus on aesthetic preoccupations. "We're more the sound art faction," she quips.

Today, the sound art faction is stronger than ever, and Kubisch has become part of a globetrotting elite comprising such other pioneers as Hans Peter Kuhn, Robin Minard and Rolf Julius. "We have been at the same festivals over the years and just now we have this big show at the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh," she comments. That they and many other sound artists live in Berlin is no coincidence, she says, continuing, "Sound art started in Germany and the States, and Berlin is really the centre of it because there are so many events going on here." One example is the recent Sonorambiente festival, which exhibited projects by a host of sound artists in venues all over the city. For Kubisch, the event confirmed that both artists and audiences are taking an increasing interest in multidisciplinary work. "The public too is aware of the relationships between sound and visuals or sound and architecture," she concludes. "Today, mixing visuals and music is so normal that you don't even notice it." □ *Two And Two* and *Tempo Liquido* are out now on Ampersand



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Words
Peter
Shapiro

Photos
Sebastian
Kayer

In the January 2003 issue of the American version of *Stuff* magazine, they named the "100 Most Dangerous Men On Earth", at number 93 – ahead of Bill Gates and Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich, and just behind former *Cheers* star Ted Danson – was "the Sid Vicious of Techno", Kid606 (né Miguel Depedro). From his early, post-gabba '90s on San Diego's electro-punk label Vinyl Communications to the occasionally mindboggling, always vicious Hip-Hop and R&B cut-ups that he's been doing recently, Kid606 has flouted copyright laws with more glee than anyone since Negativland and The Bored Squad. He has cranked out and cranked up inyourface feedback whorls without resorting to "bad music for bad people" type vibes and generally brought the aesthetics of the most hip into electronic's tawdry, dour bedazzle. And just for an encore he went on to create alliances with former Metal bad boy Mike Patton and thrown Björk Kill samples into his remakes. His puny, DIY antics are enough to strike fear into the hearts of men who like their Pete Namlook electronics as sleek and dull and ignorable and polite as their IKEA furniture. Of course, electronic music, particularly in these post-rave days, is about the least dangerous thing around – as smug and smooth and uniform and unchallenging as a free-loading fashion PR basking in Crème De La Mer in an Ian Schrager boutique hotel – so anyone with a laptop and a slightly bad attitude is bound to disrupt some Apple carts without even trying.

Though it once threatened to be the most exciting thing since punk – indeed, it almost motivated a frighteningly apathetic generation into action when the government threatened to cut their access to drugs and repetitive beats – electronic music has been thoroughly assimilated into corporate capitalism, and the small wing that hasn't is pretty much the sole preserve of the dreaded gearhound (at least in American English). "I'm not going to put on my record that it was made with this, this and this," Depedro sneers, half-declaring war on the packface IDM (intelligent Dance Music) massive from the dishevelled, collegiate halls of residence-like headquarters of his Tigerbeat6 empire in Oakland, California. "Just that people think about it bugs me, not what I'm doing or not, or that I think doing it is wrong... It's like Van Halen. You've got millions of fans; you have girls who scream and get drunk to your music and guys who just wanna rock and hang around pick-up trucks listening to Van Halen. And then you have that five per cent of geeks who care what weight guitar strings you used. With electronic music, we never had the girls, we never had the guys in the pickup trucks, we started with that five per cent and we're trying to grow out of it, and that's why it's such an uphill battle. There are a lot of artists that I know that want to be like, 'Let's rock out', You know, they get a drummer, they try to be a band. I don't think it works too well, but it is trying to get away from your original audience. Of course, your original audience is going to hate you, but the idea is that the people who go along with you are going to be much more appreciative of what you're doing. On the other hand, you've got people like Pole who are just trying to keep it to that five per cent. That's the people we get tons of shit from: [adopts sharp voice] 'Don't pimp our IDM to the masses'. It sucks that the IDM list [the Internet's long running "intelligent dance music" newsgroup] is like our drama to make things seem more exciting. No one's getting shot over it, no one is getting beat up over it, it's really not worth mentioning. Because we don't have any excitement to have to resort to that is really bad."

Instead, Kid606 lets his music do the talking and generate the excitement, not just his Max patches or his petty spats. That's why he is the most dangerous man in electronic music. Yet this enfant terrible so easily could have been higher in *Stuff*'s chronicle of danger. At number two was 'NSync and Backstreet Boys avenging Lou Pearlman. Serious electronics

I did a remix
for kid606 and
all I got was this
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spotters might remember that before becoming the name of the Kid's label, Tigerbeat6 was the name of the semi-parodic laptop boy band (four barechested 'hunks' making love not to the camera but to their Powerbooks) which the Kid and fellow traveller Cex (aka Ryan Kidwell) were going to form during their days at Vinyl Communications. While it may not be one of the great 'could have been's' of music history, just the prospect of *Teen People* or *Smash Hits* running a feature entitled 'Would You Let Your Daughter Go Out With A Tigerbeat?' should have been enough to put the Kid in Steff's top 20.

"The whole thing of combining teen angst with a new form of music is really selling yourself short as a musician," Depedro declares. "I don't think it can take you very far, it's just a downwards spiral. Your music being used as just the soundtrack to someone's angry year is the scariest thing I've ever thought of." He may have a point, but surely some of the best music ever made is just this sort of thing – Black Flag, Ramones, early Rolling Stones. "I don't think they're pandering though," Depedro counters. "When I hear stuff like Alan Teenage Riot, Green Day, all the post-Nirvana stuff, I think it's total pandering. I think it's like, 'We can get an audience through doing this.' The people who were doing it for real were like Swans, Joy Division, Velvet Underground, people who would have done it with or without. What I'm saying is people who are doing that as their entry way: 'We'll get everyone's attention, have them chant along with us and then we'll try to sell them our Ambient record.' Don't get me wrong, I think Alan Teenage Riot have done more good than bad. I just have to be a little more wary about it because that's where I get thrown into."

So long as he gets lumped in with electronic music's angry brigade, The Rolling Stones comparison isn't as dubious as it might appear on first glance and may be a more appropriate point of comparison. His music may not be about power, lust or depravity, but Kid606's wildly electric DSP cuts-ups and remixes of HipHop and R&B tracks are the 21st century equivalent of Mick and Keith channelling the energy of the blues and Chuck Berry in an attempt to articulate blind white rage. Check his famous remix of NWA's "Straight Outta Compton", where he jams a screwdriver into the CD player's door while he's recording, spills vinegar over his vinyl copy and walls on the EQ to create a scurrilous Tourette's symphony of decimated curse words and street attitude. Or his forthcoming Kid606 release, "Take The Pass On" (from the Violent Turd EP, *Freakkitchickly*), a love letter of sorts to Missy Elliott in which an abrasive Junglist remix of "Get Ur Freak On" suddenly becomes an abrasive Junglist remix of A-ha's "Take On Me".

A competing version of this fundamental drive of 20th and 21st century popular music is offered by his Oakland neighbours (literally around the corner), the underground HipHop crew Anticon. But where they desperately try to remake HipHop in their own neurotic, intellectual voices, Kid606 is perhaps more problematic, merely messing with the shiny surfaces of black cultural product rather than the "meaning". But so much of popular music's message has always been its surface, its grain, the 'simple' and bare essence of its sound – a fact only amplified by the gash production values of contemporary R&B – so how problematic is this really? Coming at the Kid's music from a British perspective where so much contemporary music is aggressively solipsistic, denying that there's even a world outside of the artist's bedroom, at least he's engaging with something. Like much of what the Kid does, it has attracted a fair share of controversy. Last year in an article in the San Francisco Bay Guardian, WIRE contributor Mosi Reeves wrote of Kid606's breakthrough *Down With The Scene* album (released last year on Mike Parson's Ipecac label), "Kid606 plays fast and loose with ideas on his

banks of computers, samplers and other sonic equipment; at one point he intersperses a menacing, disembodied (black?) voice who says, "I'll kill you, nigger" ... [H]is album, as enjoyable as it may be at times, raises disconcerting questions through its appropriation of black music; one wonders what Kid 606's seemingly innocuous forays will eventually lead to." Meanwhile, *Urb* magazine ran an article about electronica musicians' somewhat ambivalent relationship with R&B super-producer Timbaland. "That article, the Timbaland versus IDM thing, about these artists ripping off black culture," remarks Depedro, opening his and other musicians' defence, "what happened was, they were all cool about talking to me and Cex and stuff, but when they started to talk to Matmos, they realised that Matmos were not down with the underground HipHop rhythms, they were these rich guys. And they were like, 'You guys are just stealing black rage', it's like, 'Wait a second, they're stealing Timbaland's black rage?' I mean it's like, come on. They're kind of studious about black music and maybe it came from a more academic standpoint, but it's such a ridiculous accusation. When I was doing it, some kid in Oakland who comes from a fucked up family, that's totally cool... it's such a stupid thing to think that music is still... if you're going to trace a big map about all the stuff in music from blues and R&B to rock 'n' roll to who wrote what and who was covering whose songs, start with that but don't try to bring something up now about some guy in Sweden or something ripping off Timbaland's rhythms as some kind of like Aryan thing, which is just so not what it was. It's just that thing where everywhere is more interesting when there's a conflict."

In America right now, white teenagers are strutting around in baggy jeans and backwards baseball caps with that faus gangsta lean caging each other 'Nigga'. Aside from the eternally touchy issue of who's profiting and why is Eminem bigger than Rakim ever was, such racial confidence games are certainly more complex than they used to be. But what's perhaps most fascinating is that this reimaging of African-American music used to be the sole preserve of white British musicians – think Rolling Stones and The Yardbirds, Northern Soul and Rare Groove, ABC and Duran Duran, House and Techno. Why have Britain's contemporary pop musicians now decided to largely ignore black American music in favour of endless versions of Abba, Nick Drake and Radiohead? Kid606 goes some way towards an explanation in his description of his run-ins with the British music press. "For me to finally, in the past two years, not get thrown into the whole Aphex Twin thing, it's only been in America," he says. "In America I can do articles and it won't be like the first time I did an interview with one of the British magazines where it was like, 'Oh, talk to me about Alec Empire. So, you like Aphex Twin, talk shit about Aphex Twin, say you like Autecite'. Then, it's like, 'Oh, this is the next Aphex Twin'. I think that whole style of journalism is disgusting. If they're going to hear about it and like it, they're gonna want to put it in, they'll go out and buy it, they'll do it. To say, 'Here, pay attention to me' is the stupidest thing. In America that's not happening. Obviously, there's lazy journalists and there's always going to be comparisons in describing things, but there'll be journalists who get this on their desks and they won't have been into Aphex Twin. I'm just glad that not through always trying to keep up, and not having music be so important, it's more apt to kind of let things change and ebb and flow. I think musicians in the UK would do much more interesting stuff if they weren't always trying to keep up with Autecite, Aphex Twin and the things they feel are important. In America, obviously, it's spread out a million times more and so much bigger, but it's also a little more moneymaking and there's more of a community. People needed a community to interact over a music which essentially

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wasn't ours, but then when people in America started to make our own music that was kind of under the whole umbrella [of IDM] it just felt independent and free. You know, there's people like Venetian Snares putting out this hilarious dancehall/polkareggae 7", there's clubs all over the US that will play it and support it. It just seems really healthy in a way for there not to be people looking at it, for journalists not to be even caring. I'll go to shows with [housemate and Hardcore DJ] Aneurysm and he'll play to like 400 people and he'll spin a record that was pressed up at 400 copies and no one will know who it is and no one will care, but it will get everyone on their feet and totally insane and change people's lives and that's what it's all about. I bring that up because in order to do that and not to care, you really have to detach yourself from a lot of journalists. I remember when I first started to get attention from that kind of stuff, you care. And to even read it is to acknowledge it, and to acknowledge it is to let it into your head and to want to work for it. It's a 'you're working for them, they're not working for you' kind of thing... If you just flip through the NME you can write down '20 Easy Steps To Appeal To NME Journalists', if that's what most musicians in the UK are doing, then that's really sad."

Unsurprisingly, for a kid of 22, Depedro is a motormouth, hyperactive ball of energy. Even though he talks so fast, his mouth still can't keep up with his mind - ideas keep spilling out on top of each other, just like his music. Nevertheless, when too many of his peers sound like they're sucking their thumbs while in a foetal position on an unmade bed, Kid606's records aren't pure sugar rushes or mere romper room tenthums either. Not that you could accuse him of excessive maturity. "I'm really against the whole kids talking and the cutesy meowy stuff because that's not like my childhood at all," Depedro spits. "I think it's amusing when Aphex Twin puts his parents on talking about how much equipment he has and singing 'Happy Birthday' on the record, but with me personally I've always been a child and it's a way of trying to stay a child. It was maybe my way of not having to grow up in one way, but also forcing me to be responsible. It wasn't like I had the choice of going to college and making music, it was like I couldn't stand the thought of being a bum or having a day job. But at the same time, doing it, you are constantly on tour and constantly avoiding real work and having too much fun doing stupid shit."

"I think lots of musicians get obsessed with their childhood or how they came out the way they are; writers are too," he continues. "Everything I learned I learned by the age of ten", you know, so like constantly working with that stuff is some inspirational impetus for what they do, but I think it's weird self-paedophilic. 'I don't like who I am right now, I was better then'. Which I don't have at all [laughing] because I like who I am now way better, but a lot of musicians do that. Cex is definitely like that. He's totally an uncomfortable adult. He's so far from adulthood. He has to get a tattoo every couple of months because it somehow keeps him from growing up. He has all these songs about Wall Street and stuff. He has this idea, his dad is a medical lawyer, that that is adulthood. It's kind of funny that you have to be such a child to stay a child. I think it's the kind of thing that most people will get past if they need to, but me, I've only recently been passed that. Turning 21 didn't even realise, but turning 22 it's like, 'Jesus Christ, Kid606 is dead, this is the stupidest thing on earth.' I feel so old, I did all this serious, old music; I could never imagine making the music I'm making now, which is like this really hard, abrasive, but yet, not playful, but brash, sarcastic, kind of music that's not just going to be hard and obnoxious. I think there was this review of this EP in *The Wire* where it was like, 'Kid606 is all grown up

now', I think it was because I felt totally grown up, it totally wasn't me. I still love the music and I think it's perfect, but I think it was me using the music to push me in a certain direction, making me feel older, kind of like, 'I'm in love, I've been through all these serious relationships. Where I was before, it's not.' It's like the way people that are kind of mature would like push childlessness to keep them down, keep that appeal, keep that justification to be a little bedroom musician. The last track I made that was of more mature, more whatever, I called 'Act Your Age', which was a total response to that. This is the music you should be making at this kind of age. I was like, 'Yeah, I know.'

"The people I know," Depedro continues, "the older they are, the more they can handle noise and musical variety; and the younger they are they're either into Hardcore, the scene of it, or punk, the fashion of it. Anywhere else, what they do is just listen to Boards Of Canada and bleak, melodic IDM shit; and the more I feel myself getting into that the more I feel I'm just maturing into this bad, negative, realising that you can just make a million of these songs. The only kind of music I want to make is: you can only make one or two of these tracks and then you have to do something different". If you can mix something, it's really not that artificially healthy... The whole electronic musician as Freudian quest for immaturity, "I don't want to grow up, I'm an IDM kid", I just don't even get that... If I could make a good, by-numbers Jungle track I would do that. That's what I'm always trying to do and always fucking up... If I ever have to stick out a Top 40 dance track, I can't go to put in some fart samples to keep it out of that."

While the young have always been the future, what's most startling about this recent generation of musicians is how little they think about it. Not only do they all seem to be on career paths to hell, but there's no vision, no horizon, nothing but the here and now. Another thing that sets Kid606 apart from his peers is that his catalogue shows growth. Here we're not talking about the grotesque 'maturation' of a singles artist into an album artist or the escalating tedium of someone who used to make music for and about the dancefloor now discussing the pleasures of sitting on the sofa with their significant other. Rather, the development of someone with an eye on the future, who even admits that a future is possible and it won't necessarily suck. From his earliest bleats of white noise with *Rhythm Like Don't Sweat The Technique* and *Dubplate Style* through the skipping CD bootscaps of his group Disc (with Lesser and Matmos), to the notious, scintillating play of textures and references of his most recent work, the Kid's music has gotten more sophisticated without ever sacrificing the punk spirit that first propelled him into music making as a teenager in San Diego. "When I was young I thought nothing was new," he says. "I felt like I couldn't make music because everything was already defined. There was no new music. There was a time when I just wanted to give up. There's already noise, there's already Jungle, there's already Techno, there's already this, and it's like, what do you make? All of a sudden I was like, 'I'm just gonna make whatever', and it turned out that, 'Whatever' became something. It wasn't enormous, but it became enough for people to care. It happened at the same time when lots of record labels weren't releasing new kinds of music, but that started a whole bunch of new labels that pushed things that weren't around before."

"That's what I think is interesting about what we're doing now and the people that I work with, is that it's gonna be different," he continues. "Not now, but it's going to change and it's going to occur. To say that my next record is going to be a double CD and it sounds like a *Down With The Scene* rehash, or to say that everything we do is going to sound like what we've done in the past, then I just want to kill myself right now... Where we're going may not be good, it may not



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be bad, but at least we're going somewhere. Every fucking music I got into, from Godflesh to Porter Ricks, everything just dug a grave for itself. It's so sad to say that about so many people that you respect as musicians – Autoclave, Agnes Twin, all those people – and then to say, 'Well, I'm not going to do that', I don't want to do that, but it's something you've got to be aware of. They did just work with musicians who sounded like themselves, they did perpetuate it and they did just make music for journalists... What you have to do is to create something new, not wait for it to come to you. I think there's some really awesome stuff coming out, I love Mile Plateaux because it's really not money with them, they spend so much more money on things than they actually make back. Other labels, it's like, 'We've got to do something different to keep profit high and sell more records'. Achim's [Szepanski, MP boss] like, 'I want something different'... If there isn't a new, weird, cool Hip-Hop cut-up, experimental DSP record, then Tigerbeat6 is going to have to do something else. We're going have to do something crazy or a Pimmox record or something because it's going to have to keep going."

In order for both Tigerbeat6 and electronic music as a whole to keep going, Depredo thinks that it has to veer closer to good, old fashioned rock 'n' roll virtues. This is evident not just in Kid606 making plain the connections between digital distortion and the holy sacrament of an overdriven Peavey amp strumming at the seams, but in his whole philosophy. "I loved punk music and I was on a punk label," he gushes. "I loved [San Diego punk label] Gravity and I worked with Gravity. The music was great and everything since then was just to reclaim that. It was the whole thing of taking those same ideals and putting them into a different context which no one agreed with. It's so funny that now people come to my shows in Gravity T-shirts, and when I tell them that I was totally involved with all that but just did something different, it makes you feel positive that you can like something but do something else. It's like if someone from Detroit makes electro-Techno music, it's like, 'Yeah, so?' But if someone from Jamaica does that, then it's like a story right there... To market Tigerbeat6 to the IDM audience and try to make them happy – we got a Mirrored Calyx remix or a Plaid mix or tour with Funkstörung or shit like that – great, but that's a lot of work to have your music downloaded or given away. It's a thing that eventually can't perpetuate itself, especially when everyone that's buying the music is trying to make it themselves. They're going to buy the CD just to get the email address, so they can email you and ask you what you use so they can do it themselves. But at the same time, Bleatum from Blechdom sell more at live shows than any other band on Tigerbeat6, because it's such a good show and people want to take it home. They basically saw the record. You know you didn't have to get someone to buy it off the Website. Those are people who aren't going to try to do the same thing. The more fans who buy records who aren't going to try to do the same thing, the healthier you are. That's the problem with Mile Plateaux and DHR: every fucking CD you sell is another demo you're gonna get in the mail. I know that's not the case with Ipecac. I really want to try to keep things in that direction. I think it's so important that everyone tours and plays live..."

"I don't know anyone who hasn't been happier on tour than at home," he continues. "I mean everyone I know is depressed, is miserable, wants to escape. I had to tour for two years straight because I didn't have any place to live. Everyone's trying to escape something... In America, a tour's like a double win, especially if you don't have a job or don't go to school or anything. Before it was impossible because you couldn't really play the music live. I mean my first tour was all Whitehouse covers for the most part and three drum machines, and it wasn't that good. It was just me screaming the whole time. When I was actually able to

play songs and do what I wanted with, like, computers and stuff, you could do it on the road too, it was like having your studio with you and that changed everything. Then this music could tour. When I was young and there'd be an electronic show it would always suck, I would never go out. It would just be a bunch of people messing around with tape recorders. It isn't so much of an introverted computer musician kind of thing anymore. I know people who make minimal Techno, who want to be rock stars and play in front of five million people at festivals. You can do anything you want. I think it would be hilarious if they did, but it's now reaching a point where the music has to meet the medium. I mean in America you can still get an article in places like Portland or Seattle where it's like, 'Artist Makes Music With Computers'. You don't have to be big or anything, just the fact that you use a Powerbook or whatever is enough to sell an editor on doing it. I'd like to get past that point; if you can get attention just for using a computer, that means anyone else could too. I want to pass the whole novelty phase. After a show people come up to you and are asking you about what you did, and about the process and are like, 'Wow that was so new and exciting', rather than what it actually was. It's like, 'Take your heads out of my music.' At the same time, I don't want to make music that just people just dance to. I want to make music that makes people think a lot, but not about that stuff. If you're a car engineer, what kind of sprocket wrench you use matters, but it would be pretty weird if everyone who got their car fixed came in and asked you, 'What kind of sprocket wrench are you using?'

Of course, the Kid's vision isn't every electronic music fan's idea of utopia. However, the alternative certainly isn't any brighter, particularly the way the Kid sees it. "A lot of electronic music is just trying to learn the equipment," he explains. "I think a lot of the demos we get are people who haven't made a good record because they haven't figured out how to use their gear. In this world of instant gratification and people thinking things can happen so quickly, it's like bands like The Clash learned everything they needed to in the first two months of being a band. After that, they were just playing with it. Electronic music means that you're just an endless student, and it takes forever to learn various things, and the music for the most part is gonna suck across the board. They're so many things to get into and so many things to get involved in, that you can never streamline to actually perfecting something. If you don't have a really clear vision you can't just know what to get. Most people have to play around with the guitar before they figure out what they want their sound to sound like. The fact that there's no混音, you don't have to go into the studio, you don't have to collaborate anymore, just like burn a CD, boom, boom, boom – you don't even have to collect the sounds anymore, sadly – it shows that electronic music, for as long as I can see, is always going to be a second class music, something that people are always gonna throw away. 'Oh yeah, I know someone who makes electronic music' or like 'Is it music? Or is it electronic music?' It'll always be this thing for people who don't know what to do. That's why there's so many people who don't really know what they're doing. I mean, people like me and Ces, I would even accuse Phoenixes of having an identity crisis, even Autoclave..."

"The more the secrets of abstraction get taken away, the more it gets made and the less it is to be abstract, and that's why I think experimental labels have crises," he concludes. "It just sucks to have electronic music be something that is so easily ignorable." □

Kid606 appears on 33 October with Anti-Pop Consortium as part of The Wire's Underground Persistence event at Montreal FCMW Festival, Canada; and in November takes part in the What Do You Want To Do With It? digital arts festival at London's ICA. Tigerbeat6 Website: www.tigerbeat6.com

The Primer

The Wire's bimonthly guide to the essential recordings of a selected artist or genre. This month: Sasha Frere-Jones leads initiates into the 36 chambers of HipHop arcana with The Wu-Tang Clan. Illustration: Savage Pencil

A nine-man HipHop group in the decade of the solo star, black to the back but too weird for most urban radio playlists, the Wu-Tang Clan earn that most threadbare of cultural assessments, 'real' – if that means 'internal contradictions not disguised'. Everybody in the pop culture universe namechecks The Wu, yet no Wu album has sold more than two million records. Wu members have worked with Björk, Maná, Carey and Shakira O'Neal, but the group remain permanently below the celebrity waterline. There is a Wu-Tang video game and a clothing line called Wu Wear, but I've yet to encounter anyone using either. Since their beginnings in 1993, producer and leader RZA has fashioned a sound full of noise and longing that still holds sway over some underground MCs – the post-Company Flow Def Jux coalition, for example, are inconceivable without it – but there's no evidence on the charts or radio right now that The Wu-Tang are still 'the most influential rap group', as *The Daily Telegraph* (no less) called them in 1997. Has their day come and gone?

If folks buying records at chain stores have moved on, it is likely because The Wu don't really work as pop music – Method Man aside, perhaps. Part of loving The Wu is having your expectations defeated. The Wu don't give immediate thrills, don't cut to the chase (if they even know what road they're on), don't know when to stop, don't know how to make their strengths read to a larger audience, don't engage the world beyond the inside of their minds. But then, keeping your own counsel could be an operational definition of 'artist', and The Wu are, above all, listeners, listening only to themselves, and to their thousands and thousands of inular, hilious, gomic, crackling words.

You could also be forgiven for thinking The Wu aren't thoroughly HipHop, at least as most people practise it. They share few imperatives with HipHop's Old School programme (provide funk, talk charming shit in unison, discuss trousers) or its New School business plan (provide semi-funk, talk ugly philosophy alone, discuss watches). What The Wu generally do is stand on the corner and talk over generally unchanging backdrops. You could be forgiven for calling it the blues, in particular the dark-souled 1950s singer Robert Pete Williams who, over simple songs and repetitive riffs loaded with trapdoors, lied to moans about love gone bad, then tell you what he had for lunch. Both Williams and The Wu use music only as background, letting musical phrases repeat infinite so the voice can come to the fore. Thing is, many RZA tracks are loops that sound like they were programmed and recorded in the time it took to roll the tape. Spiritual/equidistant, boring/hypnotic – the dialectic is constant in Wu tests. Or Wu people. Prolix, theoretical and goofy, the Wu are stress heroes with apparently bulletproof street cred. Party ambassadors who play to the Mecca of weed, The Wu are profamily moralists who scold other rappers. Poets disguised as hoodlums, sui generis innovators cloaked as generic soldiers, The Wu know

that frustration is just a prelude to pleasure. Call for a metaphysician, and they'll send a bricklayer. Introduce yourself to unknowable superhero gangster Tony Stark, and he'll tell you how poor his health is. Oisians them as tough guys and they'll cry out for Mama. Lead them for common sense and they'll reward you with underhanded one-liners (take your pick). Reach for language and you come back with silly noise. Are you enjoying yourself? Are Wu-Tang the essence of HipHop? The last great rock group? (Missed interviews, tour brawls and jail time say it is decidedly so.) You can study Wu-Tang forever and never reach understanding. One-take improvisations in the studio, The Wu are brutal logicians in the conference room. They've spun a web of label deals around the individual members that enables The Wu to carpet-bomb retaiers with constant product. Cappadonna is not an 'official' Wu-Tang member, yet he's on two of the three Wu-Tang albums and has put out two RZA-supervised solo albums of his own. Masta Killa, an 'official' Wu-Tang member, is only intermittently present on the Wu-Tang albums and has yet to put out so much as a 12" under his own name. Tommy the Wu? Find the dragon's tail first, silly mortal. Frustrated listeners and hungry fans can visit www.ohhla.com for transcriptions of lyrics. The transcriptions are sent in by fans, so errors abound, but many mysteries will be solved.

THE GENIUS WORDS FROM THE GENIUS

COLOCHILLUNTRIPRESC CD 1991

PRINCE RAKEME (RZA) "OOH, I LOVE YOU RAKEME"

TONMY BOY TBB66 12" 1991

Start with the dragon's head. In 1991, The Genius, not yet known as The GZA, became the first Wu to reach market. Produced largely by Easy Mo Bee, Words From The Genius is of a piece with most of the Cold Chillin' label's BJs catalogue, presenting The Genius as a late period Big Daddy Kane over party beats. ("The Genius is stammerin' to, the Genius is stammerin' to") Before the laser blinks out, we've heard "Come On Me", "What Are Silly Girls Made Of" and "Stay Out Of Bars", and learned what Genius thinks about perfidious females. Subgenius.

Words probably won't surprise you as much as "Ooh, I Love You Rakeme", the RZA's 1991 debut single on Tommy Boy as Prince Rakeme. Rakeme was a jovial, randy sort, a bango-bassinet version of Digital Underground's Humpty Hump. The perky beat stays in line with the De La Soul sound (then paying the bills at Tommy Boy) while Rakeme trades bon mots with a female chorus: "I kiss the bosoms but never eat the dates", "Ooh, we love you Rakeme!", "The feeling's mutual, ladies". The B-side, "Deadly Venoms", doesn't live up to its promising title, but "Sexcapades" does come with a Wu-Tang mix, marking the first appearance of the crew's name. Does it sound like The Wu? Not particularly. Rakeme replaces

Easy Mo Bee's beat with a heavier drum loop and an Albert King guitar squeal, making it sound like the work of Cypress Hill producer DJ Muggs. ("Ooh, I Love You Rakeme" is now available on the compilation *Tommy Boy Essentials: HipHop Vol 1*.)

WU-TANG CLAN "PROTECT YA NECK"

WU-TANG RECORDS 12" 1992

Now proceed down to the neck. Like The Modern Lovers' "Roadrunner", "Protect Ya Neck" is both a reed room rumpus and a perfect circle, missing nothing, charging ever forward, about nothing. Over a RZA beat that doesn't mind moving, each MC delivers a précis of a career to come. (The Genius begins a career-long habit of critiquing the music industry: "Who's your A&R? A mountain climber who plays an electric guitar?") With the mix beat clumping along and the MCs scrabbling over each other like pups to the teat, "Protect Ya Neck" fells stoppy or hary in a way that HipHop rarely had before, despite adepts calling this a "return to roots". These guys were on some punk rock shit and it made them, for a moment, new.

WU-TANG CLAN ENTER THE WU-TANG (36 CHAMBERS)

LOUDPUPCA 65335 CD 1999

On The Wu's debut album, The RZA's still in a cloud of Cypress Hill smoke. The fuzzy thump beats are straight out of the "Tramp" and "It's A New Day" crate. RZA's melodic moves are more unexpected, though, and soon enough they will become his private property forever: minor key piano clamps, quavering strings, random clicks and cracks, samples from the Stax and Hi Records catalogues and dialogue from Hong Kong kung fu movies. (Let the record show, however, that J Saul King was the first to combine HipHop beats and kung fu dialogue, on 1989's "Depth Charge" single.) The RZA would figure out the mixing desk later and all the MCs would get deeper within the year, but Enter still sounds like the product of one long night in front of the mic, 20-odd years of dreams and sketches tumbling out. Jump-up tracks like "Method Man" and "Wu-Tang Clan Ain't Nothing To Fuck Wit" gave UK Junglists a lifetime of soundbites and made the album, atypically, a mover, but the heart of RZA's project is in laments like "Can It All Be So Simple" and "CREAM". RZA was building a new house for HipHop, a place to mourn and think and wander. If anyone happens to dance or have fun along the way, bally for them. Funk was never really part of the plan. The MCs would handle that as they saw fit.

METHOD MAN TICAL

DEF JAM 314523839 CD 1994

In 1999, Method Man disavowed Tical as "the weakest solo album", but I couldn't disagree more. Recorded



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after a basement flood destroyed much of RZA's equipment and records, Tical is compact but fired. The RZA flattens his drum patterns and soaks his samples in formaldehyde (or maybe that's just eight-bit sampling!). There's a reason Method Man is the closest The Wu have to a star, and it's not just his lantern jaws and bedroom eyes: he's the understandable one. He raps but never barks, rhymes directly but stops for scenic views, and generally acts stoned but steady. Meth is also the most female-positive member of The Clan (though that's always going to be a relative term), responsible for one of the few great Hip-Hop love songs, the unsentimental but sweetly specific "All I Need": "I'm walk these dogs so we can live in a far ass crib, with thousands of kids/Word life, you don't need a ring to be my wife/Just be there for me and I'm gonna make sure we be/Living in the fucking lap of luxury." (The better known, and better, version of this song is the remix by none other than Sean 'Puffy' Combs. Mary J Blige sings: "You're all I need to get by", only quoted on keyboard in the original, and the added layer of sugar makes the longing that much harder to shake off.) "Sub Crazy" features what sounds like a shark grinding its jaws in an echo chamber and these classic words: "Keep bop up top, ahh, here we go, star."

OL' DIRTY BASTARD

RETURN TO THE 36 CHAMBERS: THE DIRTY VERSION

ELEKTRA 67559 2 CD 1995

Playing his offstage self - Russell Jones - Ol' Dirty introduces himself as a "cool guy" from "Pluto", promising "something that nobody in the history of rap ever say theyselves to do". As Ol' Dirty, he continues, soberly: "It's a special night, because I'm happy to be hang, you know. A nigga mad to shoot me down and shh, I don't know, it just feels good to be here." Then the tears start to flow and Ol' Dirty is off on a rant about gonorrhoea which includes a quote from "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face", among other things. Truth, lies, schtick, suffering, gunplay, scatology, showbusiness, schizophrenia - the next five years of Ol' Dirty's life are all in this intro.

Somebody, at this point, must have been greenlighting all Wu madhouse in hope of big numbers, because Return To The 36 Chambers is as unsupervised as a gold album gets. "Don't U Know" is an updated Blowfly tale that ends with the couplet "Easy on my balls, they're fragile as eggs", and, on "Raw Hide", Ol' Dirty says he's "26 years old, still on welfare". "Shimmy Shimmy Ya" is a party tune from a much better place, where Ol' Dirty is "off on a natural charge, bon voyage", and the sounds all dance, even nobody's told them why. "Goin' Down" begins with Ol' Dirty making mouth noises, unaccompanied, which triggers his 'opers' software and sends us all on another natural charge. Whether Ol' Dirty is Tomming for Elektra or saying Yee-haw for the gods depends on which bits you read as jokes. Either way, he's deeply entertaining: an unhinged id on expenses, an expert in

fecal play. He would play the Fool in The Wu drama, except he's got no wisdom except that people will cut a crazy black man a lot of rope if he's only renting or, better yet, shancropping for Elektra.

GENIUS/GZA LIQUID SWORDS

GEffen 094819 CD 1995

When people say Genius is the most literate of The Wu, I think they mean that he's happy to let the beat sit over yonder unbothered. That seems like making things hard on yourself when you're making a Hip-Hop album but, hey, it's science, gods. Genius trades "romance" for "crème" on Liquid Swords and his icy skills certainly work better with darker scenarios, but Genius has none of Ghostface Killah's emotional immediacy or DJ Dirty's yuks or Method Man's chops to make it all stick. But then there's RZA's production: Liquid Swords continues his hitting streak. Now the Lee Perry parallels start making sense. Both work quick and dirty with a common band of collaborators; both let the machines speak and cherish mistakes. Can it all be so simple? (Beware: This is the most confusingly indexed CD in history. Not even the coded IDs are correct - "Swordsmen" and "Gold" are mixed up, if you believe the titles as they read on computers and the words you hear the MCs saying.)

RAEKWON THE CHEF ONLY BUILT 4 CUBAN LINX...

LOUcRICA 07635565 2CD 1995

Imagine trying to read very small type on the inside of a cigarette wrapper while standing under a streetlamp in a slow dizzle. That's Cuban Linx..., incredibly New York, smeared and self-referential, like a neighbourhood that feels familiar but isn't. A stylistic descendant of Kool G Rap and his lippy blaster, Raekwon chucks sentences down to a few words and strings the bits together to make verbal links that take days to decipher. The words are hot and chewy where RZA's music is brittle and hard: "Stand on the block/Bebop gun cocked/Avalanche rock get paid off...strive for whys/Mad lodged in lies/Max seal and enjoy the high" (from "Glaciers Of Ice"). "Verbal Interlude" captures a perfect Wu pitch midnight. The RZA's best grows like an artificial Yule log, a perfect example of what RZA himself called that "old RZA crookedness". Guest star Nas donates an organic verse while Raekwon and Ghostface drop crystals of meaning that sparkle even when you can't make them out. It's ornate! It's abstract! It is, possibly, about something! "You came in looking favour'ful," Rae tells Ghost at one point. An album of sense and sensibility, and the John Woo samples don't hurt either.

HOSTFACE KILLA IRONMAN

RAZOR SHARP/PIG STREET 089729 CD 1996

Raekwon and Ghost reunite quickly for Ghost's debut and raise the slam bar quickly, analysing various mysterious practices to various foods. "Wildflower" is

Ghostface's response to an unfaithful girlfriend and though he seems to be in genuine pain about it, you'll rue the day you had to hear about it. "260" is more like it, RZA staying close to his strengths with a plangent Hi Records horn loop while Ghostface provides one of his best everyday life postcards: "Peace Keana, what's up with your girlfriend Wanda? She drive a green Honda, with legs like Jane Fonda/I just left her, she took Rasheen to Patchmark then jitted to Canse to get her man some Clarkes/She said 'Be back in 90 minutes, Ghostface, God forbid'/She say 'Peace to W, who's watchin the kids?' On "Carmay", Ghost and Cappadonna restrict themselves to courtship, probably a first in Hip-Hop. Ghostface ends the song with a line many wish they had a chance to say: "Heya take my number, let me pull the chair from under/ had fun, plus your backyard speak with thunder." And that's as nasty as it gets. Understatement - who knew? Is "Daytona 500" unstoppable? Yes. Does Bob James's "Nautilus" seem inexhaustible as a sampling source? Yes. Does this make you wish the RZA would, you know, pep it up more often? Yes. But we know that RZA just wants to let 'em cry and that's where the tearjerking masterpiece/sepsepe "All I've Got Is You" comes in. Method sang to his woman, but Ghost is looking out for Msma. At first, the track sounds as hokey and spontaneous as the grand piano on the street corner looks in the video, but Ghostface makes every word work: "Check it, 15 of us in a three-bedroom apartment/Roaches everywhere, cousins and aunts was there/four in the bed, two at the foot, two at the head/I didn't like to sleep with Jon-Jon - he peed the bed/Seven o'clock, pluckin' reaches out the cereal box/Some shared the same spoon, watchin' Saturday cartoons/Sugar water was our thing, every meal was no thrill/In the summer, free lunch held us down like steel/And there was days I had to go to Tek's house with a note/Stating 'Gloria, can I borrow some food? I'm dead broke'." And if that's too obvious for formalists, they can enjoy hearing "shish kebab" and "dushki" near each other in the same sentence.

WU-TANG CLAN

WU-TANG FOREVER

LOUcRICA 0763558565 3CD 1997

Beware follow-up albums called Forever that answer an imagined question with wishful thinking. RZA and his B-team producers go straight for the bm with off-the-rack keyboards and drum machines on the endless double CD affair. The tracks are slow as ever, but drag-aging instead of deadlined. Shame, because the MCs are in strong form. Method Man delivers one of my favourite rhymes ever here: "We at odds until we even." On "The Projects", Raekwon continues to expand his food-based thesaurus ("light up the broccoli, put the relish in my back pocket") and "A Better Tomorrow" finds GZA worrying about his family connectivity, but listeners without a programmable CD player should proceed with caution. Putatively addressing somebody else, Genius delivers

BY DIRTY PHOTOG



a perfect capsule review on "As High As Wu Tang Get", "Too many songs, weak rhymes that's mad long/Make it brief, son - half short and twice strong." The era of RZA-produced albums is officially over. From here on in, the brunt of Wu-Tang production work falls to associates and disciples. (Perversely, this is the biggest selling album in the Wu-verse.)

METHOD MAN TICAL 2000: JUDGEMENT DAY

DEF JAM 34456920 CD 1998

Method Man had found his voice as a party rhymers with apocalyptic tendencies and his appropriate beats in True Master's mossy, chunky funk. "Dangerous Grounds" is likely to make even the doubters wiggle and the RZA-produced "Suspect Chin Music" and "Retro Godfather" are both evidence that everybody returns to their strengths, given time. Method Man's own production on "Judgement Day" is refreshingly fast, and his ongoing friendship with D'Angelo means some of the incidental singing is, for once, on a par with the rhymes. Program this one right and you should have few problems, as long as you avoid new Wu MC Streetlife and the uniformly unfunny skits.

RAZA AS BOBBY DIGITAL BOBBY DIGITAL IN STEREO

DEE STREET 035132621 CD 1998

When this album came out, some critics suggested that RZA doesn't even qualify as an MC. I happen to like his spit-blocked enunciation and overstuffed verses - check the first verse of "BOBBY" to see how much fun concatenation can be - and I loved the way he used to make the last syllable of every line rise in pitch then fade away in a strangle. But taken in large doses, his lack of charm and taste for near clinical sexual fantasies is, at best, distancing. (If you want to hear about his "apple head" springing "oder" you're in luck, but avoid "Domestic Violence" at all costs.) And, unlike even the crime-positive Clan MCs like Raekwon, RZA is fond of the kind of general threats other lesser rappers deal out. The determined will find worth in the tunes featuring other Wu members: "NYC Everything", with Method Man and "Bobby Did It", with Ghostface.

Soon after the release of this album, RZA told the New York Times that he "took the last two years going through books to learn how to play music". He even opens the album by criticising other producers: "Ultimate breakbeats and shit, right? Niggas still making money off this shits, bopin' the same shits for a thousand year." Well, it worked pretty well for you on the first Wu-Tang album, pal, and nobody wants any more "original" keyboard and drum tracks like these. Hell, his main vocal to - "Doo doo doo do" - is his imitation of the string sound from "Tical". Even RZA can't get over his early work. Unless you want kick drums on the one and three, your snare on the two and the four and no variation thereafter until the end of time, you will likely not elect RZA to the Drum Programming Hall of Fame.

GENIUS/GZA BENEATH THE SURFACE

MCA MCAD 1860 CD 1999

The producers here (mostly Mathematics and Arabian Knight) don't necessarily have The RZA's taste for the illogical but the variety works, especially as there aren't many bangers. There is, however, "Crash Your Crew". DJ Dirty Bastard screams the chorus like he's flagging down a rescue plane while John The Baptist's beat surges like the mixing board's done a *Fantasia* and come to life. "Hip Hop Fury" is one of the Wu's better low profile tracks: RZA runs his testosterone against an uncharacteristically fragile track by producer Arabian Knight, belittling the hook: "You crunchy chump get crumpled up like crack rocks! Fuck with The Wu, we busting your whole snobbox!" So there! (Conscious alert: This track is also on Wu Chronicles 2.) "1112" features some stellar GZA verbiage: "I'm spending 50 on a whip/Buy equip/Mental flip/Got a thousand tracks stored on a chip." He said he had made toys to make him. He splits and separates drums like asteroids. "I also appreciate the anti-gum, anti-corporate public service announcements scattered through the album, which feel more surprising than the average 'man on the street' Wu skit. Unexpected move: "Publicity", a sequel to Liquid Swords's anti-industry rant "Labels", with magazine names substituted for label names. Definitely the only Wu-Tang song to mention Creative Loafing and the Village Voice.

OL' DIRTY BASTARD NIGGA PLEASE

EMERICA 62414 CD 1999

Ol' Dirty's life after *Return To The 36 Chambers* was eventful. Mr Jones renamed himself Oskus in 1996 but soon thereafter switched to Big Baby Jesus, for obvious reasons. Already a victim of a shooting in 1995, in 1998 Ol' Dirty was shot in the back at his own Brooklyn apartment during an unsuccessful robbery attempt. Later that year he was charged with shoplifting and thrown out of a Berlin hotel for hanging naked from his balcony. In January of 1999, Ol' Dirty was charged with attempted murder, weapons possession and assault. (He was later found not guilty on all charges.) In March of 1999, Ol' Dirty was stopped by police after going through a red light and charged with possession of 20 vials of crack and a bag of marijuana. What a good time to release an album. The mood here is desperate, as Ol' Dirty breaks down in front of the mic. "I Can't Wait" channels Ol' Dirty's mania into a remarkable train of a song and some of the Neptune-produced tracks still work as comedy, but Ol' Dirty is mostly writing on the spot, threatening everyone whose name he can remember and dishing out repulsive sex talk. "You white motherf**kers can't ever take over," he says promisingly on "Rollin' Wit You", before asking someone for beer. Babylon, sady, doesn't take many more direct hits on Nigga Please. Ol' Dirty's newspaper headlines started acting as his real videos.





The Primer



THE WU-TANG CLAN MEMBERS

while the video for "Got Your Money" contained only chopped up blaxploitation clips and excerpts from the "Shimmy Shimmy Ya" video.

HOSTFACE KILLAH

SUPREME CLIENTELE

EMPIRAZOR SHARP EX69325 CD 2000

Defeating conventional wisdom about the career arc of artists, Ghostface increased his horsepower, swing and language while on hiatus and delivers one of the strongest solo MC albums of all time. His words are a microweave mesh of John Ashberry-style poetry, shopping lists and iceberg Slim: "Ht Poughkeepsie, crispy chicken wings throw up a stone richer/Chop the D, sprinkle a air snow inside a Domo/Swing the John McEnroe, rap, rock 'n' roll/Tidy Bowl, gung-ho pro, Starstruck with the gunsole." You'll have to sprint to keep pace with the alternation of prosaic and space-age ideas here. Oprah, 5D cent souls, Van Halen - it's all in here.

Ghost's voice is loud enough to make amplification superfluous and his cadences are full of dips and sing-song phrasing. He could have rhymed over Mike And The Mechanics and come away in the plus column. Luckily, he did not. Edited and arranged by RZA and Ghost, the sampled beats from Mathematics and lesser known producers like Hassan and Black Moes-Art are a welcome break from RZA's sub-Neptune keyboard clichés. If one song can be isolated from the serial mayhem it might be the Hassan production "Apollo Kids", which pivots on a heraldic horn blast from a Solomon Burke tune. The video for this song renders the illogical rush of this song pretty well. Ghost eats an ice cream cone, wears a fur coat and manages his own Wallabee shoe factory.

THE RZA

MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE GHOST DOG: THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI

Victor Japan VCP80044 CD 1998

HOST DOG: THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI: THE ALBUM

EMPIRAZOR SHARP EX69394 CD 2000

To create the music for Jim Jarmusch's samurai gangster movie, RZA returned to the Stax and Hi fi vaults, summoning the Wu sound of the golden 1993-96 period. Insiders and fans will point you to the expensive Victor Japan version, which features all the instrumental tracks in the film (most of which do not appear on the American Sony version) and only four rhymes. The tracks (mostly just loops) wander, and have a lighter feel than other Wu projects. "Untitled #12 (Free Jazz)" sounds like a conference call among Monk, The Uptown Horns and The RZA, and it may well be. The sound is vivacious and loud, as though RZA has jacked his sampler directly into the mastering deck. "Fast Shadow" is a Wu gem, small but perverse, with Ol' Dirty's only strong verse of the 21st century. "RZA #7" actually has some bounce to it (though the loops fall out of time) and "RZA's Theme" has that "blind, man making a salad" feel that classic Wu puzzlers

used to have. Despite some lassitudes in the back half, the hit-seeking American version is equal to its instrumental counterpart. The addition of rhyming - "Funky Theme" the instrumental becomes "Strange Eyes" the rhyme - adds some force and several tracks rank with the Wu's best: the Old School funk duet between Kool G Rap and The RZA, "Cakes", and the sibilant, near static incantation "Don't Test/Wu Station" by dancehall crooner Suga Bang Bang.

WU-TANG CLAN

THE W

LOUD CLOUDS CD 2000

If you want proof that The Wu are a living contradiction, here it is. After being absent as producer from some of The Wu's best work, and about to record one of the weakest Wu records yet under his own name, the RZA comes through here with possibly his most consistent productions yet. The W is a serious return to form for everybody involved. "Careful" and "Click Click" are mudfests in the tradition of Total, and "Protect Ya Neck (The Jump Off)" is good enough to earn its title. The standout tracks are some of the highest points in Wu history. "Hollow Bones" is simply staggering. Over nothing more than a loop from Syl Johnson's funk classic "Is It Because I'm Black?", Ghostface and Raekwon periodically strata a crime narrative with enough swing to fuel an entire album. "I Can't Go To Sleep" features fake crying, Isaac Hayes and plausible apocalyptic scenarios, while the icy "Jah World" is The RZA's lament come full circle: a funeral march. The combination of Memphis soul shout and Kingston soul cry first heard on Ghost Dog comes to full bloom here. (The only weak track is "Conditioner", a phonend in duet between Ol' Dirty and Snoop, who both do as little as possible.) Soulful, sonic and fierce, The W will hopefully earn its rightful place over time.

VARIOUS

WU-TANG RECORDS PRESENTS: WU-CHRONICLES

WU-TANG P251143 CD 1999

WU-CHRONICLES CHAPTER II

WU-TANG/PRIORITY 624461 CD 2001

Though obviously marketing lobs aimed to keep Wu on the shelf while exploiting some catalogue, these two low profile comps actually do a consumer friendly job of collecting worthy rare tracks and extracting good tracks from not so good solo LPs. The first volume is the strongest, with the Notorious BIG/Methed Man duet "The What", RZA's excellent soundtrack appearance, "Tragedy" (also the best Wu video to date, with full flying-tiger kung fu effects), and "Hip Hop Drunkens", an Ol' Dirty/Akkohlos duet that finds everybody at their vaudevillian best. The remaining tracks by Wu affiliates make for acceptable filler. Volume II is valuable for "Rumble", a U-God track that could be Company Flow in a pinch, and DJ Spooky's "Catechism", a felicitous moment for the otherwise log Kilah Phat. Both volumes prove that any track can be improved by a Method Man cameo.

RZA AS BOBBY DIGITAL

DIGITAL BULLET

IN THE PAINTROCK KOC1982 CD 2001

Bobby We thought we knew ye. RZA still has not received a charm infusion and his combo platter of Five Percenter philosophy, greasy misogyny and gun fantasies is still a bad lunch. "Black Widow Pt 2" manages to capture Ol' Dirty at some point in his fugitive phase, but it's a sad, slack affair. The only bumping track is a Dirty South emulsion produced by Tony Touch but unfortunately it's "Domestic Violence, Part 2", which RZA describes in his press kit as a "response" to the first version on *Bobby Digital In Stereo*. What, he didn't get enough airtime? RZA claims here that he's "sold 20 million records." If we trust a Babylonian source like Soundscan and add up every single Wu-related release, then we get close. But in fact, none of Bobby's has even gone gold and *Digital Bullet* is unlikely to change that, unless the vigorous TV and radio push behind the competent single "La Rhumba" continues. Ah, the romance between label and recently-signed artist.

The current state of The Wu is fluid, at best. After impressing authorities by appearing on stage with The Wu in October of 2000 while on the lam from rehab, Ol' Dirty pleaded guilty in April 2001 to criminal possession of crack and marijuana and was sentenced in July to two to four years in state prison. Soon after his sentencing, which was delayed by a court-ordered psychiatric examination, RZA posted a bulletin called "Dirty In Danger" on www.wu-tang.com. Ol' Dirty Bastard fears his life is in jeopardy and that a conspiracy is in effect to kill him. These concerns have been presented to the DA and prison officials have been alerted to the threat to his life... If something happens while Ol' Dirty is in the custody of these officials, his family, his 13 children, and The Wu-Tang will seek full retribution in a civil resolution." A September article in the Village Voice quotes The RZA as saying Ol' Dirty is "scared", while RZA's assistant, Tam Layton describes Ol' Dirty as "lethargic" because of various medications. In August, the Wu-Tang Records offices in Greenwich Village closed suddenly while, unrelatedly, the Wu Website posted a message that Cappadonna had gone AWOL from The Wu. RZA has promised another Wu-Tang Clan album before the end of 2001, but Method Man has stated publicly that the Wu family needs to get its affairs in order before that happens. In turn, U-God has gone on record saying that Method Man is "always on the fucking road, so he doesn't know what the fuck is going on". Ghostface's R&B-styled new single "Never Be The Same Again" has just started creeping onto the radio. As we go to press, www.wu-tang.com is inoperative. Ol' Dirty Bastard's *Free Dirty*, a collection of previously released material is out now on Elektra. Ghostface Killah's *Bulletproof Wallets* (Razor Sharp/Epic) will be released in November. Raekwon's *R&G* (Rae And Ghost United) is due out in winter 2002.

U-GOD

6GHOSTFACE KILLAH



Charts

Playlists from the outer limits



Flo-motion 15

Classic Score
Sincerely Yours (Knew)
Ska
Super Pro Kid (Emmet Saint Laurent Remix) (Phatboyz)
Various
Dublab Presente Freeway (Emperor Norton)
Balkanika
Creative Conkery (Gripped Dick Hot Weel
Ian O'Brien
New Sound For Old Blues (Infused)
The Other People Place
Lovers Of The Laptop Cafe (Warp)
Womad
Fanged Scenry (Chilicape)
Alex Gordon
Small Craft Warnings (Krewe Casuist)
Percussion
Endless Summer (Megz)
Axai Koyller
Echale Sembal (Hi Top)
Akasaki
Bennwenda (P Communication)
Bella
Sakatai Sera 1 (Music Conception)
Toni Alesser
Deep And Wide (Bueno Mondo)
Abstrakt Niveau
Lundström (Popendrg)
Victor Madero
The Mungs Of Monsieur Méléy (Inred)

Fonosenzus 15

Grinc
All Angels (EDC)
Hultekid
Ubikko (For A Barn)
Zazou Kali Partouz
Vivid (Fling Noz)
Papaya (Krautzeit)
Looking East (Bachord)
Seljekko Nemtylek
Aara (Ponderosa)
Das World Ensemble
Bromo (Krautzeit/Modern Jazz)
Sakuramata String Trio
Meditations Of Unity (Sakuramata)
Rainforest/Music From Papua New Guinea
Bossa (Followers/Sinfonietta)
Guitar Arpeggio/Orchestra
The Shredder (Senns 2001)
Hans Gavins & Eugene Chadbourne
21 Years Later (Luv)
49 Nerd
Animal Language (Unif)
Gitarrenklang/Folklore
Viva Nostalgia
Toshihiko Nakamura & Sachiko M
Dro (Ernesto)
Flaherty/Kelley/Voigt
The Big Tree (Bachord)
Lazarev
Tarka (Speaking Beatrix)

15 Japanese Erotomaniacs

Asthetic Blues Players
Gitarist Bed
Boccalys Fruil
Superball aka Death Fuck aka Miss Osaka, etc
The Ultra Fuckers
Golden Syrup Lovers
U Like You
Mylets
Super Nadist
Umbilico Eppure
Autobentchidist
Prenormal
Contagious Organs
Royal Squeezit
Organs Kronika

The Office Ambience

Various
Talita Tofu (Hornswoggle)
The Velvet Underprord
Boiling Series Volume 1, The Oure Tapes (Polydor)
Various
Freestyleblocky (Molent Tard)
John O'Groats
Inferno (Bominc)
Nasty The Observer
Morphine Attack 1994-95 (Blood And Fire)
22 Sadies
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Various
Talita Tofu (Hornswoggle)
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The Olitary Concert (Impulse!/Universal Jazz)
Kevin Blanchon
Tales On Story (Tigerbeat 8)
Buddy Cane
The Golden Age (Thinjockey)
Various
Soul Symphony CD-R (D-Dub)
Rasta Scream
The Essential Radio Brothren (Sub Pop)
Various
Nigeria 70 (Strut)
Eckhardt Kliwes
Play Cassettes (Staubgold)
John Fakay
Days Have Gone By (Fatlabel)

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Compiled by The Trewler. All persons' names taken from the book Japanese Independent Music (reviewed in The Wire 21)

Compiled By The Wire Sound System

We welcome charts from record shops, radio shows, clubs, DJs, readers, etc. Email: editor@thewire.co.uk

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This month's selected CDs, albums and singles

JOHN COLTRANE

THE OLATUNJI CONCERT: THE LAST LIVE RECORDING

IMPULSE! 01149 CD

On 23 April 1967, three months before his death from liver cancer, John Coltrane performed at the Olaturji Center for African Culture in New York City. With him were drummer Rashied Ali and bassist Jimmy Garrison, Alice Coltrane on piano and Pharoah Sanders on tenor saxophone. Albie DeWitt added a Yoruba instrument called the bata drum and, it is speculated now, Jumma Santos may also have contributed percussion. It wasn't Coltrane's final concert, he played Baltimore early in May, but it was the last one to be captured on tape. Sensing the end, it would have been understandable if he had grown introspective and guarded, but here Coltrane and his friends are still looking straight ahead, and the music is incandescent. Bernard Drayton, who acted as engineer, has supplied the tapes. They're not as clean as hi-fi heads might like them but that just heightens the intensity of the music's purging tide. Billy Taylor has scarcely introduced Coltrane as one of the most remarkable forces in jazz, when the floodgate opens, and thereafter, for an hour, music drenched with pain – yet filled with joy – pours into the room. That's not reviewer's rhetoric. In a series of landmark concerts and recordings, Coltrane had established himself as the most articulate musical register of the turbulence-shaking American society during the mid-1960s. Faced with personal disaster, the emotional charge of his saxophone playing tapped still deeper reserves. And in the face of death, Coltrane remained not simply defiant – he was positively aspirational.

For the last ten years of his life Coltrane engaged in a quest for spiritual growth. His musical identity expanded. He broke through the strictures of tonality and moved well beyond strategic use of dissonance to

reach an inclusiveness that symbolised in sound the universal embrace he craved. In 1965 this took form in the volcanic mass of *Ascension*, an imposing musical statement of rare concentration and power. In the same year, Coltrane's outward journey also took the form of pilgrimage in sound to India as well as further towards African sources, the mysticism of OM, and the rhythmical adventure of *Kulu Se Mama*. His legendary dedication to practice, rigorously and tirelessly probing tenor and soprano for new expressive means, was not the navel-gazing obsessiveness of a technician. Coltrane finessed technique towards the goal of transcending the physical limitations of his instruments. His mastery of his horns served his desire to make them channels for a universal music. Hence the unparalleled extent of his influence on everyone from The Byrds to John McLaughlin, Tim Buckley to Charles Gayle, La Monte Young to Evan Parker, to name just a few.

Energy, speed and duration were Coltrane's accomplishments in surpassing all expectations of what the saxophone might achieve. With his own body in extremity, facing imminent dissolution, the impulse towards transcendence in his music assumed unprecedented urgency. *The Olaturji Concert* comprises two half-hour pieces, "Ogunde", which he had recorded in a quartet version the month before, and "My Favorite Things", the Rodgers &

Hammerstein tune which had become in his hands, in October 1960, a springboard for one of the great events in jazz history. Coltrane was never content to simply rehash a familiar package or a past triumph. Here more than ever, the melodic lines he handles with such feverish imagination are primed to splinter and disintegrate into the torrent. The theme to "My Favorite Things" appears especially precarious, an illusory form, a provisional configuration projected upon the surface of the absolute.

The Olaturji Center was opened in Harlem in 1965 by Babatunde Olaturji, an eminent drummer born in Nigeria. Rashied Ali seems to be breathing air that burns with rhythmic complexity. On 22 February 1967 he had shared a creative peak with Coltrane, making the magnificent duet album *Interstellar Space*. Two months later, Ali again shows himself to be the ideal percussionist to accompany Coltrane on his journey away from fixed determinants and across limits. Sanders too is the perfect partner, his rasping, shaking tenor adding rugged contrast to Coltrane's fiery refinement, while retaining a secret subtlety within his roughness. Alice Coltrane effectively overcomes the suspicion that piano has become an item in the inventory of the music's memory, superfluous to her husband's requirements. The instrument now bolsters density rather than steering the show; it's used for attaining critical mass rather than as an anchor or safety net. The additional percussion serves the same end. Which leaves Jimmy Garrison, the bassist whose special role in Coltrane's mature musical life is acknowledged with a lengthy solo at the start of the epic voyage beyond "My Favorite Things". It's apt recognition of his strength and dedication as the sturdy launching pad for some of the most incendiary and vitalising sounds ever produced in music, the rock around which the cleansing fire ritual was repeatedly staged.

Coltrane aficionados have awaited this moment for many years. An invaluable historical document has at last been retrieved. But as well as being an important addition to the archive, this is pure inspiration, elemental music that veers towards delirium and generates a huge sensation of release. It's John Coltrane and his loyal friends riding the rapids into the ocean of sound. It's also a farewell, pervaded with sadness, fury and dismay, and a passionate affirmation of life, crying into the future. □

Dying of liver cancer inspired John Coltrane to drive the music harder in his quest for its universal embrace.
By Julian Cowley



NOËL AKHOTÉ

SIMPLE JOSEPH

RECORDINGS RICAMPS CO

BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

Though still in his early thirties, Noël Akhôté already has a highly impressive CV. The Parisian guitarist cut his teeth conventionally enough with Chet Baker and Tal Farlow, but in the '90s he started experimenting on projects ranging from Balkan funk to trashcore groups. Shirts with Henry Texier and Louis Sclavis led to brilliant work with The Recyclers; further, he has collaborated with heavyweights Evan Parker and Derek Bailey; and he also runs his own label, Rectangle.

Like its prototypical forerunner Alka Joseph, Simple Joseph is a solo work of intimacy and introspection. Whether a conscious inspiration or not, its spiritual companion is Derek Bailey's String Theory. Read this as a huge compliment. The first three compositions build similar structures, with the fourth, an acoustic codicil, reinforcing them by presenting their unplugged counterpart. Building multi-frequency oscillating hums into gentle hypnotic drones of lo-fi ambience, he creates a quasi-industrial soundscape reminiscent of pulsing generators that build into a dynamic of Reichian minimalism. His warm amp valves (no solid state here) allow intricately controlled feedback to melt into the solid fix. Cutting in and out of this collage are the odd twitches and glitches produced by electrical leakage and discharge, the throw of a switch between pickups introducing a crackle in the circuit.

From inconsequential disturbances, these minutes are momentary jolts of disrupted to the pains of contemplation. A shock chord will echo festingly or a fingerpick drumming on a string will be gently eased into the wows, to remind listeners of the guitar's presence. All these sounds are integral parts of the guitar/amp DNA, and are celebrated all the more for it.

The maturity of this work is evident in Akhôté's surrender to the unveiledness of the music on its own terms. It's as if it's out there in the ether and a mains supply unearths it. Treating guitar and amplifier as a closed loop, Akhôté becomes its conduit, its creator and detached observer simultaneously.

OREN AMBARCHI

SUSPENSION

TOUCH 133 16 CD

BY WILL MONTGOMERY

The appropriately titled Suspension fixes Australia-based guitarist Oren Ambarchi even deeper inside the twilight world of hessian and hailing motion that he opened up on last year's *Insulation*. This is a more fully reasoned work than that strong disc — a definite step forwards. Or sideways. Ambarchi has developed a highly original guitar technique which preserves the instrument's six string warmth even as it owes much to contemporary electronica. Indeed, his music has affiliations with both post-techno programming and post-noise Impro. He might use loops, but his way of refusing to let them form straightforwardly repetitive switches underscores his evident lack of interest in strongly marked rhythms. The compositions move along in a fog of understatement, neither settling into drones nor resolving into a barrage of noise. And for all his

nuisance avant park roots, his playing has become positively approachable — the title track trails ribbons of sound that are positively pretty. Further, he takes feedback overtones from more aggressive settings and re-presents them simply as sound. Exploring feelings of incompleteness, his new pieces formulate sequences of notes that seem to require resolution, only for the composer to withhold it. Notes hang in the air, while angular phrases are economically looped. The soothed attack of his notes makes for a mysterious, velvet-textured environment, in which the scenes he conjures up continually dissolve and re-form. This is intelligent, thoughtful, predictive ambience.

APHEX TWIN

DRAKOS

WARP WARP92 2XCD

BY ROB YOUNG

Not since 1994's Selected Ambient Works II has Richard D James, aka Aphex Twin, ushered his legions of obsessives into such a cavernous cabinet of curiosities as *DRAKOS*. That earlier album remains the foundation on which much of his towering reputation still rests — a model of mid-'90s electronic tundra, a vertebrae of witness to lose yourself in, in all verbal references removed; just segmented symbols in different colours left as signifiers to divide up the giddy dustclouds of discrete track. This new collection is far more wilfully 'edictive', but with a choking layer of selfconscious nonchalance that makes it as unusable as much of his (limited) output in recent times, with the exception of the ubiquitous 'Windowlicker'.

The sleeve is festooned with strange-angled shots of a piano's innards, emphasising the wailing parts of that well tempered instrument. And indeed, much of the soundworld of *DRAKOS* is, on first encounter, one part Erik Satie and piano impromptu, two parts marvellous mechanical music machine. James's parts last of samples, click and tick over like the kind of automated Victorian organ you might expect to find wheezing away in a some of HG Wells' 'Kluydly-Burg Misfit' (had you going to have to get used to these titles — there are 30 of them) is typical: plucked metallic sonorities twang tautly in harshly defined stances around plangent synthesised interlocutors. '2k11' is one of the best moments of all: one and a half minutes of close-miked speakerbox whirring; another is 'Rugien Holon', a miniature for prepared piano.

But not enough of *DRAKOS* confidently breaks new ground, and too often James falls back on the all too familiar dysfunctional jazzbeat which has typified Aphex output since 1996's *Richard D James* album. Although also twd's '54 Cyno Beets' and 'Metaphase 6' compact everything James excels at this mode — smelting goblets of Acid baseline, frenziedly digubious and subliminal sonic bits into a tungsten-lined flickerfunk — they're about as good as it gets. 'Gongga-Switch' is a clumsy old halfflop of a track, thrashing its way through the jungle in the hombusiously trashedape Mode Aphex and his buddy Tom Jenkinson, aka Squearupher, smoke so defiantly their own in fact, that Jenkinson's smoky beats tick off Dekkō's section writing, keeping everything clean and tidy.

'Bell' is a bore. It's a spore chimescape, the 'acting' track which signals ironic detachment from the preceding compendium of equally banging 'Cock/Vir 10', phoning in a bawled 'Come on you cunt, Jeff's have some

Aphex Acid!' as it benders towards a crescendo. Jenkinson's more recent trajectory into live improv collaboration has proved to be a more daring and interesting route from the electronic bedroom.

The majority of the remaining tracks are too much cake and no nuts. 'Bayhondhond' is a mischievously wistful over a reinvigorated electro-timbale groove. 'Lemacerek' features the voices of his parents singing 'Happy Birthday' to 28 year old Richard, grown up and gone to the big city. It's neither touching, nor particularly funny or ironic: you get the feeling he erased it from the answering machine immediately after mincing it. Only in a few pieces does James point towards more seriously incisive territory. On 'Gwerek 2', agitated human strains lead into a dark, buzzing, clobwebbed cavern of cracks and rumbles, as if Chris Morris had commissioned Darren Pomeroy to soundtrack his next series of *Blue Jam*.

Based on past admissions, true or not, there's the disappoing feeling all the time you're listening to it that the selection on *DRAKOS* is just one combustion out of many possible choices. It's not just the pinnacles of his achievements at the mouse over the past three years as a randomly selected clutch of the thousands of tracks, half formed experiments and half-cut half-baked James can fork out with one hand while the other is joybanging his way through *Tomb Raider* II. It has become his lot to exist in a permanent state of seismic siege against the culture that would adopt him. That may make for amusing and amusing statements, but you have to be a very good comedian indeed to make your work more than a period piece. Nor so much career development as career regression.

BODY PARTS

BODY PARTS

VANDOEUVRE 3002 CD

BY BEN WATSON

Body Parts are Rudi Dutschke (electric guitar, voice) and Guguy Chenevier (drums, voice). This album was recorded in March 2000 at the Centre Culturel André Malraux in Vandoeuvre-les-Nancy, apart from a closing, 20 minute track named 'Synch Improv/Anteaus/The Round Nose Of Some Twenty Years/2 Languages Take Twice A Long', which was recorded live at a Cocteau rock station. The cover shows Dutschke and Chenevier smoking a bit of paradise of naked female bottoms, and likewise the music wafts selfconscious about sonic urges: med confronts matter in a stocking question mark.

'Pet Song' is bolshiegn with a Van Halen guitar solo. Magma reinterpreted as Japanese pop metal. 'Du Haas Du Mur' employ a backwards riff, limny drums and cartoon tanners. Dutschke is adept at clearly articulated runs, all arpeggios, corksworks and bedrings. 'The Coope' features deathcore pummeling, treddy rock riffs shot in the usual bellowing York. There's whammy-bar flying sasser mayhem, but Chenevier's simplistic beats tick off Dekkō's section writing, keeping everything clean and tidy.

'Bell' is a bore. It's a spore chimescape, the 'acting' track which signals ironic

detachment from the preceding compendium of teen rock excitements. Cuckoo clocks, toy soldier drums, dumb squeaks and vacant repetitions: sex is a stupid machine whose workings are observed with amusement. The clipped sound of our paperplane evokes a classical repression, a preference for transcendent mind over temporary matter.

Yet 'The Man Who Hated Pets' — traditional theme of adolescent trades versus domesticity — is irresistibly Devo-like in its attitude towards rock infidelity, voicing both satire and wonder. One senses a tinge of expressive ask. 'One Wooden Leg' is a sexual arousal as disablement, while 'Beautiful A Democracy', with its tension, release and bracketing of time, suggests the formal resolutions pioneered by the mighty Kenny Process Team. On 'Queen Day', electric guitars become metallic percussion, its relation to the drums — the rests, counting, precision — a kind of strenuous homoerotic athleticism. 'Soft Loud' is more ambient irony. Lo-fi fence-wire thumps, spacy Casio scales, hi-fi bowed guitar.

The closing noise fest at Cocteaulet station is a logical extension of these satirical squibs: insist as the only means of resisting the public's patronage. For the sympathetic listener, though, it's an unsatisfying conclusion. Body Parts are alert to the idiocies of the norm, but if their music isn't going to remain merely mental (albeit contemplative), they'll need to let the non-conceptualised body matter of improvised rhythm have its say. Chenevier should be advised to take some lessons from Ronald Shannon Jackson.

CHRIS BURN ENSEMBLE

THE PLACE 1991

TMNEM 4056 CD

BY BILL SHACEMAKER

Recorded at a London festival called *Closesounds*, whose mission was to 'highlight the musical and creative links between jazz improvisation and the work of contemporary composers', *The Place* 1991 documents two noteworthy firsts for pianist Chris Burn's Ensemble. It's particularly intriguing that Burn was engaged as the ensemble's first guest soloist on Burn's 'Blocks And Arches' as the ensemble's success at making persuasive collective statements has been partially due to the subordination of the extreme virtuosity Parker oil but inverted. His tenor squelches trigger strong exchanges with John Butcher's soprano, flautist Jim Denley, guitarist John Russell and Burn, resulting in a more fervent music than the unisonous usually muster.

The other, less successful, debut is Keith Rowe's 'Pollock #2', the ensemble's first composition by an outsider. With each musician working off individual graphic scores taken from Jackson Pollock's paintings, the occasionally wonky performance nevertheless has a strained episodic feel compared to Butcher's 'Southern Samba A Go-Go', which is propelled by synth player Matt Hutchesson's exotic percussions and Burn's 'Potato 'Ere Coal', which is built around Steve Wishart's hurdy-gurdy. Burn remarks in his sleeve notes about the compatibility of the loosely improvised 'Hammer Hit' with the ensemble's preconceived structures, which speaks to the specific qualities of their procedures and protocols. It is a delicate balance easily tipped, even by the likes of Parker and Rowe.



THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

BOOTLEG SERIES VOLUME ONE: THE QUINE TAPES

UNIVERSAL 3149870072 3CD

Preserved by time and failing memories, and pickled in mystique, a legend's potency is derived from the depth of its audience's need of it. With vested interests to protect, meanwhile, the keepers of the legend feed the myths around it to increase demand, even as they carefully limit its supply. But, by dint of its age, a legend is a fragile thing. Painfully aware that their capital can be very easily destroyed by a powerful dose of truth, its keepers tightly control just how much gets out and when.

Founded on four studio albums and a viciously debauched junky-fag reputation that placed them somewhere between Hubert Selby and the Marquis De Sade, the legend of The Velvet Underground is seemingly unassassivable. The stature of those albums grows stronger with time, even as the relatively few witnesses of what really went down during their five year spree of supposed debauchery grow fewer. But at last one of them has come forward to spill the beans: Robert Quine, former Richard Hell and Lou Reed guitarist and, more pertinently here, massive Velvet Underground fan. Further, he's brought with him four hours' worth of the cassette recordings he made of the group live in 1969. Cherry-picking the best of The Velvets' residencies at San Francisco's Matrix and Family Dog clubs that winter, plus a 28 minute take of "Sister Ray" from Washington University, St Louis, and Universal's VU archive, Bill Lewison (who has previously overseen the *Peel Slowly And See* box, and the VU and Another View collections of studio scraps) have reconstructed three facsimile live sets. If that "volume one" tag has any credence, then this constitutes the first chapter of an ongoing "bootleg" series that finally tells the true story of The Velvet Underground. Because, for all the brilliance of their four founding studio documents, The Velvets were a live group above all else. Given their under-promoted records' catastrophically poor sales, they had to be, if

only to eat. However, from the inadequate officially available evidence – *Live At Max's Kansas City* (featuring Lou Reed's dispinted last stand with the group in 1970) and the erratically great double 1969 – any just court would be compelled to turn in an open verdict. Now the release of *The Quine Tapes* means everyone can discover what the bootleg collectors have been trying to tell them all along. Far from destroying The Velvet Underground's legend, the true picture emerging from these recordings deeply enriches it. Granted, their debauched reputation is irrevocably shattered by the warm rapport Lou Reed's easy between-song patter engenders with the small yet enthusiastic audiences at the Matrix and the Family Dog. In the process, they also scotch the myth of the antagonistic relationship between sunny, laissez-faire San Francisco and dark, cynical, New York. The Velvet Underground are very evidently enjoying their West Coast trip and, for all the occasionally cruddy bootleg quality of Quine's mono cassette recordings, you can hear it in performances relaxed enough to stretch out, ad lib lyrics and experiment with song structures and tempos. "Released" isn't a word you hear a lot around Lou Reed and The Velvet Underground, but how else can you explain an extraordinary 13 minute "I'm Waiting For The Man" (one of the CD set's two versions), wherein Reed rustles up whole new verses and even whistles between them? Naturally, Reed whistling completely blows the tense atmosphere of the first album's definitive recording. But in place of studio original's concrete symmetry and taut documentary realism, at the Matrix Reed plays it like he's recollecting the scenario of a white boy going upstair to score, much later on, when all the tension of the act has dissolved in a state of blissfully opiated tranquillity; and his fellow members – Sterling Morrison on guitar, Moe Tucker on drums and John Cale's replacement Doug Yule on bass and organ – are likewise content to buff the rhythm's edges into a rubberised rhythm mattress so the narrator doesn't hurt himself on it.

Of course, not every truth you learn from this new

A new Velvet Underground 'official bootleg' series reveals a legendary group at the peak of its powers, says Biba Kopf

set of hard facts contains a fruitful revelation: Some of the rarer Velvets material first exposed on the 1969 album or the two scrapbook collections will always be throwaway. Because they didn't have to worry about crashing them, however, these throwaway songs often made the best vehicles for the group's joyriding guitar raves. Compared with the racing 1969 version, they just can't get up to speed on the take of "Too Much" here, cranking through its creaky changes like an arthritic Bill Haley & The Comets. Elsewhere, they're not about to let their joyriding opportunities go to waste. The first CD's romp through "Foggy Notion" – essentially the loonytune flipside of the methedrine-fuelled "White Light/White Heat" – is floridly exhilarating. From the beginning, Reed, Cale, Morrison and Tucker understand better than anyone how to crosswave trance-inducing minimalist monotony and rock 'n' roll creativity to create an idiot-proof, two-stroke rhythm engine capable of chugging all night. As Cale's replacement, Doug Yule might not have shared his predecessor's understanding of advanced theories of harmony and dissonance, but he sure could keep the pedal pressed to the metal for the duration of Reed and Morrison's extended motorpsycho guitar thrashes. These relatively late versions of The Velvets' most splintering, atonal pieces, namely "White Light/White Heat", "Venus In Furs", "Herman" and "Black Angel's Death Song", games cover Cale's absence in fuzz, distortion and volume leaps. Best of all are the set's three versions of "Sister Ray", clocking in at 24, 28 and 38 minutes, through which the group release whatever emotions they've allowed to build up during the night. All three takes are surprisingly joyous. In place of the original's party nightmare rage, you vanously get slapdash, slapstick and slap 'n' tickle carnival mirth, especially on the two spiced with "Foggy Notion", all of them faced with some of Reed's fuzziest guitar freakouts.

By the time the third runthrough of "Sister Ray" finally brings *The Quine Tapes* to a close, now lipstick stained and whiplashed scarred, the legend of The Velvet Underground stands taller than ever. □

ROY CAMPBELL IT'S KRUNCH TIME

THR3TY EAR TH4RD 197 CD

BY BEN WATSON

Roy Campbell is an inimitable trumpeter. In 1986, his muted, quasi-oriental contribution to the Billy Joel's *Live At Caruso 1*, was just right. His *Pyramid* has been running since 1984 and has used many of New York's finest: drummers Reggae Nicholson and Susie Ibarra, bassists William Parker and Tyler Mitchell. For this concert record, he's again acquired top-notch players: vibist Khan Jamal, bassist Weller Morris and drummer Guillermo Brown. According to its manifesto, Thirty Ear's Blue Series (artistic director: Matthew Shipp) was founded to oppose the "stagnancy" of current trends. Everything bodes well, so how come the disc is

disappointing?

Although Andre Strobert's engineering was sufficient for The Pyramids' Trio's *Acrostical Homeland* (No More), he is defeated by the tricky sonics of the vibes. At first, it seems like some bizarre Sur Af style start to feed the music in vibraphone chords (Jamal unleashes some torrential playing on "Khandutung") and a laugher Campbell's trumpet to a distant room. However, added to weak playing by the leader and a noisy sputter cut-off on "Dile For Me DC", it feels more like low budget carelessness. Drums and cymbals sound soggy, implying a music meant to cut, not drift.

Ending with a solo trumpet version "Star Spangled Banner" dedicated to President Bush – legit playing peppered with shtickening asides – is cute enough, but if a group is going to recall the glory days of experimental Blue Note, they need rehearsal time and sound production to match. At the moment, inexpensive digital recording is giving us fine audio photographs of solos and duos by technically inventive improvisers. However, if we are to hear the complex interplay of trumpet, double bass and drumset, let alone a vibist as inventive and crazy as Khan Jamal, we need something more lavish.

BOBBY CONN THE GOLDEN AGE THRILL JOCKY THRILL054 CD

BY KEN HOLLINGS

Like painting on canvas, songwriting is one of those human activities that's so said, you're surprised it can still claim an unclaimed place in 21st century life. But there you go: it does, walking a painful fine line between knowledges and novelty. Just like Bobby Conn, who has crafted a vicious series of little monologues about suburban teenage excess, waste and debris around hooks and rifts lifted from 1970s Top 40 radio.

Filled with the memories of some lost and deceased summer, his songs feel like an endless shedding of dried skin, a sloughing off of dangerous marmers. "Man It's kind of a drag," he moans in his wild emotive voice on "Angel's", "when a small town lugger is trying to off himself" when "I just trying to get it on for the very first time." In the background you can hear Steely Dan slumming while David Bowie is starting to fall out of love with American soul music. Producer Jim O'Lourke keeps the surface noise sparkling, as disco, glam and Country rock collide with each other like kids huffing Carbora

ringoxide at the local roller derby. Wish John McEntee at work on some of the mixes and Monica Boubou adding her plangent string arrangements, this release runs low for the most luxurious effect and the deepest track. We're talking white trash Cockney Rebet here, and that's most likely a compliment. This whole album is basically about what boys get up to when they're alone in their bedrooms. So it comes as no surprise to discover that Conn has a passion for toy helicopters and spends a lot of his time designing helpads for his hobby. You can imagine the sketchpads and magic markers scattered across the carpet while *The Isleys*' "The Heel Is On plays on the record player. Meanwhile, you're feeling like you're on the edge of something unbearable, waiting for punk to happen. Except it already has.

HOLGER CZUKAY LINEAR CITY

DIGIMON 010001 CD

HOLGER CZUKAY & U-SHE TIME AND TIDE

DIGIMON 010001 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

When he recorded *Moves* (1979) and *On The May To The Peck Of Normal* (1981) Holger Czukay was out on his own, ingeniously integrating uniquely samples and allusions into witty and emotive songs. Since then his highly personalised magic has been only sporadically evident. *Linear City* signals a new departure that harnesses Czukay's idiosyncrasies within a constructively experimental project. It's subtitled "Internet Audio Collates Vt One" and presents four charity pieces shaped in part by musical choices and input from collaborators who have accessed his Website (see Directory). His signature remains clearly audible but refracted through participation in these virtual ensembles.

Although Czukay sought to escape from "ethno-tourist excursions" when he emerged into this exchange, "Africa Smeeth" and its variant "Africa Susieka" are dense montages charged with memories of Can at their most ethnographically inauthentic. There then lies the robotic "Ecotrig", dislocated voices meshed with slipping rhythms, and the melodramatic epic "Ten Steps". Both feature liturgical vocals from Czukay's wife, U-She.

On Time And Tide, hatched apparently between 1993 and 1995, U-She assumes a major role. Art critic John Berger has suggested that timing is "the skill of playing with silence, distributing it cunningly". By his definition, U-She's timing is sawed on this album. Her voice is too prominent, there's too much of it and its placement lacks cutting. She often resembles Nico in her intonation, but her pastel-tinted version lacks Nico's quintessential starkness. At his best, Czukay's timing has been impeccable. But the 11 songs he has written here are unmemorable, and guest spots from old Can colleagues Jaki Liebezeit and Michael Karoli fail to raise them beyond the pedestrian. The title song, up on U-She's "Without You", with its minimally worded brevity over a thick drone. Unfortunately, the four other U-She songs are not so distinguished. Czukay and U-She get it right on the speedily paced *La Lusa* (recorded 1996, released 1999). *On Time And Tide*, however, they're on the ebb.

DACHTE MUSIK

DACHTE MUSIK
GROB 01114 2XCD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

During the early 1970s ibernard's trombonist Radu Malfatti was based in London, playing free-wheeling jazz in groups with Chris McGregor, Elton Dean and Nick Evans, and freely improvising with the likes of Harry Miller, Phil Wachsmant, Evan Parker and Frank Perry. He was already in the vanguard back then, and today he works still further out, in such fascinating settings as here with the trumpet amateur Franz Haubringer and the radical guitars of Burkhard Stangl and Gunter Schreider.

Malfatti previously played with Stangl in the first incarnation of the group Polweschel. The Dachte Musik quartet operates at a point beyond Polweschel's melodically poised and contrasting textures. On these two hour-long improvisations, music dissolves into its constituent elements, notes resolve to new instrumental soundings. Haubringer has already charted this territory alone on his extraordinary album *Gomborg* (Grob, 2000), and it's fascinating to hear him interacting with like minds. Both pieces are sparsely figured and often extremely quiet, yet they're filled with dramatic tension. The four players click and rattle, pop and scratch, and the gaps between are charged with latent sounds. Tension builds and the silences feel ready to burst. This is accomplished without reliance upon an abstractive structure. Relationships between instruments are ephemeral, not fixed; still, the music holds together with implausible evenness.

Dachte Musik involves remarkable suppression of conventional virtuosity. These are highly skilled and widely experienced musicians but individual identities are subordinated to the music's requirements, to the extent that it is often not clear who is playing at any particular time. Instrumental identities are blurred too (trumpet becomes guitar, guitar becomes trombone) and references to musical history are notably absent. Both performances are immediate, yet they grip the attention as they unfold with no plot to remember and no goal in view.

ARTHUR DOYLE &

SUNNY MURRAY

LIVE AT GLENN MILLER CAFE

AYLER AY0002 CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

Saxophonist Arthur Doyle's recent hook-up with drummer Sunn Murray has been extremely fruitful. Murray's a ferocious partner, capable of ballyhooing duels, but Doyle's so completely in his own zone that he never uses to Murray's relentless challenges. This CD was recorded in Stockholm, the city where Albert Ayler later claimed he first "started to play what was in my soul", and was promptly hauled off stage for his vision. It's fitting then that the late alto saxophonist Bengt Fröppe Nordström, who actually recorded Ayler's first 'official' date (released on Sonet as *The First Recordings*) joins Murray for a short run through of some heavily Ayler-reverent material before making way for Doyle. Nordström died six months later, making this final appearance a touching tribute

Tresor.

Fumiya Tanaka

Unknown Possibility Vol. 2
CD/Do-EP 95176-2/6 Tresor 176



Neil Landstrum

She Took A Bullet Meant For Me
CD/Do-EP 95177-2/6 Tresor 177



Neil Landstrum

She Took A Bullet Meant For Me
Tour 2001/2002

- 05.10 Edinburgh/Scotland – LIVET!!
- 06.10 Future Funk/Bristol/UK
- 12.10 Electrowerkz/London/UK
- 27.10 Sonic Groove/Teur/Seattle/US
- 02.11 Test/Sonic Groove/Scotland
- 03.11 Fuse/Brussels/Belgium
- 10.11 Prag/Studio7/Denmark – LIVET!!
- 16.11 Dublin/Ireland
- 17.11 City Live/UK – LIVET!!
- 23.11 HOG/Birmingham/UK

Singles

DJ Shufflemaster

Angel Gate
Remixes by Surgeon and
Chester Beatty
MS 56176-5/6 Tresor 175



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Matt fyfytche picks through the rubble of post-reunification Berlin to uncover Neubauten's role in its reconstruction

EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN

BERLIN BABYLON

EGO EG01101 CD

EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN

STRATEGIES AGAINST ARCHITECTURE III: 1991-2001

MUTE MUTM001 3XCD

The theme of Hubertus Siegert's feature length documentary, *Berlin Babylon*, is "the melancholy of a city undergoing radical change, that, with all its might, wants to win back its ruined structure and outrun the shadow of the past". Following the narrative of Berlin's urban reconstruction post-1989, concentrating on the power conflicts between construction magnates, architects, city planners and workmen, it's a complex fable of a city caught between the desire for reinvention and the need to invoke the ravaged body of the past as a curse against the wrong kind of future. A counterface to Wim Wenders's *Wings Of Desire*, written in concrete rather than dreams, the film announces that "the leap into the 21st century is turning to stone". What better group to provide a soundtrack capturing the tension between construction and destruction than *Einstürzende Neubauten*? The choice was inspired, not only because of Neubauten's long-term association with industrial materials – beating music out of rubble and metal – and their concern, since their inception, with 'strategies against architecture'. But besides this, Neubauten's mining of Expressionist lyricism and continued probing and reanimating of Berlin's spiritual pasts and underworlds, cleverly chimes with the paradoxical situation Siegert is trying to evoke – a yearning for the city to receive its rightful body, which is phantasmically dislocated from both past and future, circling endlessly round the sites of present transformation and clearance, and playing ambivalently with languages of destruction and dream.

This is, in effect, the psycho domain Neubauten have been carving out for themselves in the last decade, as they've moved from anarchic rage to more languishing and theatrically embellished forms of lyrical disturbance. "The Lay Of The Land", the only extended Bixx Bargeld vocal here, taken from their most recent album *Silence Is Sex*, provides the soundtrack's apotheosis and is an invocation to melancholy – "Meis, Meis, Melancholia floats over the

new city and over the land" – dryly tasseled in a half-whisper over a cool, understated but tense bass and metal percussion groove. The ghost of Marlene Dietrich, who won't go to rest in the city to which she returned in a coffin, hangs in the sky with outspread wings, "sleepless and with frozen gaze, pointed at rubble, behind her the future piling up". And this image in turn replays that from Berlin intellectual Walter Benjamin's description of the "Angel Of History", which is also read out midway on the album as a talisman of the city's stalled attempt at civic reinvention: "The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed," but a storm blowing from paradise "irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned". Neubauten crank up the noise of the howling storm and the shattering glass.

Lycanism that won't die and the brutalising entrance of reality are themed throughout. This is given voice partly by the ubiquitous conjuration of frozen tremolo guitar and loping, punchy bass and drum beat, but often by direct montage, such as the passage where the fragment of a 1934 Berlin Philharmonic recording of the funeral second movement from Beethoven's *Symphony No 3* segues into the sounds of demolition, smashed concrete and the trinkling rain of glass. Shorter tracks intertwine delicacy with fatuousness, Morricone style: single strokes of bass or piano set against sticks that clatter fleetingly on metal, glass and fragile bells. But it's the taut, understated percussion riffs and piston-like grooves of NJ Unruh and Rudi Moser that carry the longer tracks inexorably forward – a counter-industrialisation of the soul, steered against any compromised recovery.

By a devilish coincidence, this month also sees the release of the third instalment of the group's retrospective compilations of unreleased and obscure material. Covering the years 1991-2001, it finds them becoming involved in various dramatic projects – the Viennese street pageant *The Eye Of The Typhoon*, a commission for the Canadian dance company La La La Human Steps, and Werner Schätz's version of *Faust* – at the same time as their destructive, existential stance drifts from the heights of industrial fury evinced in the 80s into more lyrical and theatrical expressions of spleen, a more international and stylish grand gugnol of the soul. As if mirroring this

turn of events, it's also the decade that saw the departure of machine-tool welding, found-object percussionist FM Einheit, and the regrouping of the original core of Bargeld, Unruh and Alexander Hacke with new members Moser and Jochen Arbeit. Nothing here is quite so furious, raw and abrasive as the material on *Strategies II*, with its emphasis on burning up the soul. The slant on *III* is more on seductiveness and tension, on hypnotic, nervy or motorik rhythms, and a more sculpted and lyrical form of venom. Largely consisting of unreleased material, the set includes five versions of "Redukt", in which Bargeld switches between whispering fairytale about the destitute life and a more possessed chorus, in which words are spat out like teeth; and the combative, motorised vocode of "Ende Neu". Both of them are swagger anthems for the skeletal and the misbegotten. "I Wish This Would Be Your Colour" appears in its original form, a spontaneous improvisation from Neubauten's 1997 European tour, redolent of gorgantic night voyages in cryptically agonised spaces. There's an alternative version of the prowling, ominous "Architektur Ist Gesellenname" ("Architecture Is Hostage-taking") from *Berlin Babylon*, while the intimate "Blume", appearing in its original French version posing a circular clockwork riff plucked on guitar against the sexily confessional spoken delivery of Diana Orlof, shows the group capable of beauty as well as the beast.

A scattering of tracks present Neubauten's more offbeat side: "Zentrifuge", from *Eye Of The Typhoon*, showcases Unruh's specially built installation of guitars and gongs played by a motorised device; in "Scampi", the members use sound to convey the cooking of a particular dish (Arbeit plays the "aroma..."); and "Helium" is a vehicle for Bargeld's high, cartoon-like voice after inhaling the stuff. What's missing, perhaps, is that side of their work which resonated with a wider context of art terrorism and political disillusionment in Berlin, though "Wüste", recorded during the outbreak of the Gulf War, prompted FM Einheit to construct a zone of sand and rubble in the studio, taping the sound of burning oil dripping past the microphone. Still, if the original manifesto of Kolossal can't be pursued indefinitely, *Strategies III* shows the aftershock still extending and resonating. □

to someone who lived and breathed film music. For the rest of the disc Doyle's on *Imitating* and ultra-primitive form, sounding weird Egyptian calls through his horn that trail off into demonic laughter. The tricky job of carving some dynamic out of Murray's relentless cymbal and snare work draws out some of his restlessness, introspective work to date. Doyle's regular showstopper "Nature Boy" opens boldly, only for the saxophonist to start throwing in little questioning phrasings until he drops the horn altogether and bursts into song, "We Few Jazzy Men Speak" is even better, with Doyle ducking and rasping, as Murray finds off round after round is attempt to kill him. Doyle's fine sevenetoes, "The Arthur Doyle Concept Of Playing The 'voice-O-Phone'", completes this package, "First you have to come from the belly," he deadpans, "like you are throwing everything out of it." Ringdeed sets are not recommended.

DRAG CITY SUPERSESSION TRAMPS, TRAITORS AND LITTLE DEVILS

DRAG CITY DC010 CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

A Drag City Supersession is one of the year's most gloriously stupid militias. Inspired by an Al Kooperian Supersession with Mike Bloomfield and Steve Stills back in 1966, a host of Drag City's heaviest players convened to toss riffs under the inauspiciousness of Edith Frost, Smeghi (Bill Callahan) and ex-Royal Fluxus man Neil Hogeney. It's a frantic mess from the get-go, with Hogeney's ultra-wired bass playing forcing vocalista Callahan to shake the nanolegacy and make with some rapid tongue action on the opening "Zero Degrees". Edith Frost tans on an energetic cover of Lou Reed's "Charley's Girl", complete with a doo-wopping chorus over which guitarist Tava Key pouts, mimes, and mind-splitting fuzz. Teaming through several tracks, her guitar work is gleefully untuned and exuberantly full on. Callahan's songs work least well in this company. He is at his best when his material is stripped to meticulously orchestrated near silence, whereas Neil Hogeny constantly throws on chaos. His "Everyday" is a psychotic piece of babblegum bewilder, fizzing with lines like "When you see how I play your jaw's gonna break with only", and completed by Jessica Bailey and Matt Bauder's totally bizarre arrangement to horns and strings. He is thrown in a high energy slob at Black Sabbath's "M"!, gurgling like Dory, as Key pummels the riff into submission. It ends with Edith Frost's "One Complain", a bizarre one-chord roar layered with honking, event horns and strings, and beefed up with the addition of drummer Ryan Murphy and Jim D'Raphe on lead guitar. Apparently, there's more where this came from. A second helping, please.

KAHIL EL-ZABAR & BILLY BANG

SPRITS ENTERING
DRAG CITY DC020 CD

BY BEN WATKIN

Persecuted Kahil El-Zabar calls his groups The Ritual Trio and The Ethnic Heritage Ensemble, but there's an element of jive-ass showmanship when he moves from drumset to hand drums, thumb piano or berrimba (or, as he does here,

sings a creaky version of "Old Time Religion"). However, if it's not going to be maimed in the solemnity of art or mysticism, jive-ass showmanship should be hailed as part and parcel of the *heritage*. In the cover photo, with his shades and stow Parappa hat, El-Zabar looks like a stoned hipster lounging about in a seedy bar as drawn by cartoonist Ray Lowry. Just as mutes and hand and clowning play a crucial role in free improvisation, so El-Zabar's ability to shake a rhythm from any instrument provides just the spritzer freeform jazz requires. In wolfish Billy Bang, who has played avant garde, instrumental ethno-pop, white cube art solos and consummate post-Dmitriy bop, he finds his ideal partner.

They begin with the title song, a typical pentatonic blues from Bang, full of unguarded sentiment and tagged with exorcism. El-Zabar claims a special affinity with Bang, and they balance porpancy, whimsy and funk with defiant grace. On "Song Of Myself", the tune references the major chord beatfulness of gospel and Broadway, though an impish sense of rhythm prevents it becoming mauldin. On this straight acoustic recording, El-Zabar's various percussive gimmicks provide textural agitations which bring the music into the orbit of electronic materialism. Bang's twanging, energized lines play together a ceaseless dialectic between linear logic and felt rhythm. Plausible white tone sonorities veer off into scabbed extensions with delightful, exposed-nerve logic. The result is individual and fresh, the project of The Art Ensemble Of Chicago shorn of its theatrical trappings and distilled into the notes themselves. On first listening, sound production seemed rather weedy (it would be good to hear Bang on one of Alvin Faderly's in your face recordings), but finally the spindly details add up to a springtastic experience: a seashell rub-a-dub in 3D feel-o-vision.

On April, Billy Bang played a Butch Morris "conduction" at New York Tonic, his personality totally at odds with Morris's dictatorial baton. El-Zabar's funny timbresology requires that Bang is still himself, his unlikely mix of sentiment and caustic still fizzing.

GOEM

DISCO

FOURTH DIMENSION FD004 CD

BY JIM HAYNES

The post-Technotron outfit Goem began purely out of serendipity, when Roei Melech brought a strange electronic device to a student "sound stimulator" to Kapetzi Muzek, the mischievous concrete group he shares with Frans De Waard and Peter Damelinkis. Perhaps something like a square wave generator, this machine offered pulses at varying speeds and lengths, to which the two applied tight delays, EQ treatments, subtle syrups and additional beats from a broken DJ rhythm drum machine. The resultant ping-pong motorik rhythm presented a much more structural dance than the recycled sounds of Kapetzi Muzek and thus warranted the entry of Goem into the Muzek "house" of projects. Beepbeep, Shifts, Quest, THU20, Freiband and Captain Black, set up to accommodate these prolific artists.

True to its disco, the unweaving rhythmic pulses on Goem's soft album hold an unmissable connection to the Techno

minimalism of early Sähkö recordings. Yet where Mika Vainio and Ilpo Viljanen had their "complex sound generators" built with specific crystalline tones in mind, Goem revel in their student stimulator's "mistakes", coaxing cable buzz and malfunctioning crackle into tightly controlled plastic exercises marked by a steady bass thump. The choice of slow to mid-tempo rhythms make it clear that Goem aren't about to topple Gregg Monder – unless the dancerfeer is swimming in a sea of nubes onde.

HILMAR ÓRN HILMARSSON & SIGUR RÓÐ

ANGELS OF THE UNIVERSE

FAT CAT FAT037 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

These key players within Iceland's current creative surge collaborate here on the soundtrack for *Angels Of The Universe*, a film directed by Fredrik Thor Fridriksson. Formerly a member of Psycho TV and now well established as his country's most prominent film composer, Hilmar Órn Hilmarsson wrote the bulk. His music is scored for violins, acoustic guitar and percussion sparsely distributed against electronic clouds and washes, and on initial listening it seems to move by, in the way a Popol Vuh soundtrack might when detached from its move. With further listening a mood takes shape – melancholy, wistful, elegiac. It's stamped with an effective simplicity that is commonly associated with spiritual values and aspirations, purges of everyday human complexity. Sigur Rós contribute two concluding tracks: a brooding and steadily intensifying pomp rock treatment of a traditional lullaby that merges with a suitably somber version of the funeral music accompanying death announcements on Icelandic national radio.

Both pieces were previously available on the quartet's *My Batteri* EP (2000), but they sit remarkably well as the capstone to the soundtrack's solemn architecture, translating the personal mood evoked by Hilmarsson into terms of collective sentiment, private feelings amplified into public ceremonial. If some of Hilmarsson's music bears traces of Pink Floyd at their most pastoral, Sigur Rós touch upon the calcified goarder of early King Crimson. Of course, they're not alone in their retrieval of elements of value from the corpus of Progressive Rock. Such a process fits into a certain understanding of life. Hilmarsson confided to Rob Young (The Wire 203), "the invisible world is always with us. I think magic and ritual works only if you believe in it." This album may be the soundtrack to an age-old cycle; then, the old myths leaking back to soften a hard-headed world.

WAYNE HORVITZ & THE FOUR PLUS ONE ENSEMBLE

FROM A WINDOW

AWANT AWAN005 CD

BY CLIVE BELL

Originally a member of John Zorn's Naked City, Wayne Horvitz is a keyboard player whose extragang work is always worth a second look. His relatively low profile is maybe due to the subtlety of his approach, and his sheer variety. Unlike Bill Frisell, for instance, Horvitz doesn't have an instantly recognizable voice. His 80s



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JACKIE-O MOTHERFUCKER

LIBERATION
ROM COME RICD0911 CO

JACKIE-O MOTHERFUCKER

THE MAGICK FIRE MUSIC

ECSTATIC PEACE EATO 2LP

To the current generation, the 1960s are slipping slowly into the depths of history, with their cultural, social and political ramifications losing some of their immediate impact. Greying old men, frumpy women and grizzled bums now extol the idealism that they held in their youth, wondering why today's children show little interest in their revolutionary past. It may be inevitable that the 60s will simply dissolve into a text, devoid of the emotional impact that *Pants 1968* held for Europe or the assassination of JFK for America. Yet below these commonplace narratives, mysterious strands of undiscovered mythologies, conspiratorial conundrums and compelling fairy tales continue to grow out of the detritus of 60s culture. These secret histories are the fodder for the convoluted pantheon constructed by Portland's avant rock ensemble Jackie-O Motherfucker.

On one end of the spectrum of this pantheon, Jackie-O present their namesakes, former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, as a sombre icon of grace, utopian dreams and the redemption of an entire country through her mourning. And on the other, there is the impish spirit of musicologist and animator Harry Smith, perhaps best known for his curation of *Folksways* Anthology Of American Folk Music. While Smith's amazing collection jumpstarted the folk movement of the 60s, it wasn't so much a 'best of', but rather a demonstration of Smith's philosophy, with its insistence on the interconnectedness of all things. Smith's interest in Appalachian folk music, hokum blues, Navajo rambances, Ukrainian painted eggs and hermetic

alchemy was never an undefinable eclecticism, but rather a complex extrapolation out of the transcendence of primitivism.

Kennedy might stand as the diametrically opposite symbol of subtlety and beauty against Smith's squalor and rhizomatic logic, but Jackie-O Motherfucker find common ground within the whispered "what if?" that follows both individuals. In Jacqueline Kennedy, the question becomes "what if JFK hadn't been shot?" Yet in Smith, the question is far more down to earth: "what if the communal aspects of bluegrass, rock and jazz were taken to their most libertarian extreme?" Jackie-O Motherfucker cultivate their own transcendence in bridging the improbable dream with this unlikely musical hedgehog. Their empathetic speech may also be muttering such further improbabilities as if blissful daydreams on a lazy summer afternoon: "What if the Symbionese Liberation Army overthrew the US government?", "What if Jandek became a top 40 commodity?", "What if the river flowed upstream?", "Knowing full well that none of these could ever come true, Jackie-O articulate them as bittersweet, meandering half-structures of lethargic blues inspired guitar licks, sputtering sax lines and amorphous percussion.

Liberation, their seventh album, tumbles through its opening track with an uncompromising, free noise squalor worthy of the lack of structure found in The Neck Blues Band and Sun City Girls. The ensuing "Ray-O-Graph" is comparatively composed, with its cheap but unwearing beatbox and a twangy guitar that repeats its best notes at an unhummed pace, while the rest of the massive ensemble make themselves known with a quiet racket. This play between patterned composition and free improvisation is one of the few consistencies that Jackie-O will announce in their work;

the rest is a rough-hewn jumble of obtuse metaphor, crass noise and beguiling indifference. Just when the erosion and upheaval of form starts to make sense, Jackie-O issue forth an honest to God song in "Something On Your Mind", a backwoods ballad complete with Southern drawl and front porch stomp. For all of its sonic complexities, *Liberation* lives up to its name as an album content in the disorienting freedom to allow oneself to wander.

Where *Liberation*'s contradictions are guided much more by Harry Smith, the *Ecstatic Peace* double LP *The Magick Fire Music* finds Jackie-O Motherfucker looking to Jackie Kennedy Onassis herself as their muse. Here, the ensemble present a more structured facade with the melodic/rhythmic crescendo of high lonesome guitars, and place less of an emphasis upon the cascading free jazz rhythms and undefined polyphonic dissonance. "Extension" opens the album with a buned collage of shortwave radio heterodyning and disconnected voices, but emphatically steps forward with a guitar duet between a saddened David Pip-like riff and an intertwining effects-laden chimed tone. After the clunky twang of Jew's harps on "Bonesaw", Jackie-O return to the evocative, spacious and cinematic Western riffs (especially on the breathtaking melancholy of "The Cage") as an effective means of transcribing sound into a psychic landscape that is strangely similar to Godspeed You Black Emperor. However, where Godspeed! bracket their tight orchestrations around a social pessimism that eventually leads to a cathartic enlightenment as to how shitty the world is around us, Jackie-O Motherfucker settle back into a drugged stupor of oddly psychedelic grooves that are less cryptic messages, and more consoling visions from America's past. □

Jim Haynes is liberated by Jackie-O Motherfucker's conspiratorial conundrums and cathartic enlightenment



group, The President, trashed in force, paired down melodies. In the 90s, his Hammond B3 organ propelled the haunted funk of Zony Mash. The Four Plus One Ensemble, meanwhile, shows a mellow, acoustic side, with Horvitz playing more piano, grand, prepared and, yes, Violin. Ewyne Kang, from Fissel's acoustic quartet, lines up with Reggie Watts (keyboards), Stern (bassoon six) and Julian Peesler (the trombonist from Herbie Hancock's Sextant group).

'Plus One' is the curiously inclusion of Tucker Martin performing live electronic processing. With a splash of echo here, a string of reverb samples there, or treating the saxes as if heard down a phone line, he contributes colour while adhering to the discretion and modesty that is the group ethos. Though one does anything so vulgar as take a solo, this music could be called postmodern cool jazz. Herzig made a good example of this on his 1987 *the with Bush Monks and Bloody Preverte, here Below Zero*, where the three musicians split their time between leaving huge amounts of space and doubling on deep, frozen, 808 keyboards. 14 years later, The Four Plus One have a more nostalgic angle – Kang's volla on the title track refers to folkloric colours and acting.

Scandinavian modes, Horvitz's liner notes have a pleasantly domestic quality, as he recounts how he wrote most of that previous CD (for Intertone) one sleepless night on an Italian family holiday.

The mood is evocative with a touch of swing, even hymn at times, and this is surely disturbed even in the two occasions a film drama track kicks in. There is plenty of intimate, attentive group improvising and – that Horvitz speciality – negative space. But Horvitz's melodic material, while fragmentary, is soulful and effective. Coupled with Peesler's beautifully melodic trombone, this is what stops the music drifting off into inconsequentiality, and makes for a satisfying album.

NOAH HOWARD

RED STAR
BOXHOLDER BXH014 CD

BY ALAN CUMMINGS

Noah Howard is one of the few great freedom players of the 60s to retain even a hesitant grasp on the future. More than 30 years on from the New Orleans slob's debut on ESP and the forgotten classic *The Black Ark*, he's still capable of fling off sweetly sprightly and fiercely sensual fusillades. During the bleak years following the deaths of John Coltrane and Albert Ayler, Howard moved to Europe, joining the free jazz diaspora of exiles like Frank Wright, Alan Silva and Sunny Murray. European recognition had its downside in American obscurity. However, during the past few years releases on Enja and this latest release on the emergent Vermont label Boxholder have brought Howard to wider attention again.

Originally a Europe-only release in 1977, *Red Star* has long been one of the rarest and most tantalising items in Howard's discography. Much of the interest is down to the participation of another long-time jazz exile, the drummer Kenny Clarke, who participated in those legendary early 40s proto-bop sessions at Minton's with Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Charlie Christian and Dizzy Gillespie. The quintet on the Red Star session also include long-time Howard collaborator and soaring pianist Bobby Few, and trumpeter Richard Williams. The group sound like

they're anxious not to bighten Clarke on the first two tracks, which are perfectly acceptable as background music the next time you invite your parents over for a barbecue. So long as you're not looking to the fine music to light it. The piece ambles languidly, its big bold themes carefully stated, and everyone gets ample solo space (Few's bluesy piano is especially good), but the pyrotechnics are held well in check. Things hot up a bit on the lengthy final track, Clarke picks up the tempo, effectively fracturing it here and there with some of his famous cymbal 'bombs'. Howard, Few and Williams sneak some beautiful rap solos, and the whole has a merrily vibrant feel. Nothing revolutionary there, but it's still a fascinating collaboration.

PANDELIS KARAYORGIS TRIO

BLOOD BALLAD
ULE UH025 CD

KARAYORGIS/MCBRIDE/VANDERMARK
NO SUCH THING
BOXHOLDER BXH018 CD

BY BILL SHOEMAKER

Pandelis Karayorgis is a stealthy pianist. The gist of his music is often only implied, especially when he employs the slow and medium-slow tempi that dominate *Blood Ballad*. A phrase trails off into silence; a sustained note lingers like fog, a chord is blown out like a candle. Such moments are like slumber jazz: intensity is tentative, even fumbling vulnerability with unironic cogency. While Karayorgis's surfaces impress comparisons with Ron Blake and Misha Mengelberg, melancholy undercurrents of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn give the album much of its emotional impetus. Remotely related to Ellington's "Frusterion", "Centennial" veers from ailing, bluesy lines to the faux awinkiness of phrases veered in seconds to create a subtle emotional tension. The Strayhorn-inspired title piece thrives between tenderness and desolation, its theme thick with sighs and gaps. Both tracks are fine starting points for examining the sensitive interplay of Karayorgis, bassist Nata McBride and drummer Randy Peterson. If you thought the jazz piano format had atrophied long ago, think again.

On *No Such Thing*, Karayorgis, McBride and Ken Vandermark, who is heard here mainly on clarines, mesh the agenda of Jeanne Gutfreund's early 60s trio with Paul Bley and Steve Swell, and Karayorgis's abiding interest in Lennie Tristano's expanded sense of form and tonality. However, their materials extend far beyond the soft jazz Gutfreund articulated on his trio's LPs for Verve and Columbia. Vandermark's "Sled Into The Sun" opens the set with the bristling staccato shapes commonly associated with Anthony Braxton's music of the '70s. Even when a gentler attack and hints of a walking tempo hold sway, as on Karayorgis's "SAC", the thematic materials have an acute angularity that makes Gutfreund's music quaint by comparison. Additionally, Karayorgis, McBride and Vandermark also deliver into my neo cool on such rewarding tracks as McBride's "27 Valentine" and Vandermark's "Let Me Know", the latter benefiting from the composer's smouldering tenor. On these tracks, Karayorgis's study of Tristano's music is most readily apparent in his rhythms, which is efflorescently smooth despite sharp accents and dense voicing; and, like Tristano, he uses rhythm to stir his cohorts,

HELMUT LACHENMANN

MOUVEMENT (VOR DER ERSTARRUNG)

KAROS 09120204K CD

HELMUT LACHENMANN

ALLEGRO SOSTENUTO

KAROS 09121219K CD

BY PHILIP CLARKE

"A music of dead movements", "pseudo-activity" and "bubble from emptied rhythms" are the phrases Helmut Lachenmann uses to describe the material in his 1984 ensemble work *Mouvement (Vor Der Erstarrung)*. Although the scratchy, screeched sound of his music is often compared to free improvisation, his references are as purely German. The 'dead movements' and 'emptied rhythms' are an acknowledgement that the great rolling Germanic tradition that produced Beethoven, Mahler and Schubert ground to a shattering halt somewhere during the opening decades of the 20th century. His music is a comment on how to rebuild a language from the ghosts of the past. His groundbreaking 1979 article, "The Beautiful In Music Today", lambasts composers who try to rediscover an idealised vision of German music through cheap allusion and quotation. For Lachenmann, "inherited categories of communication" elbowed by the structures and forms of 18th and 19th century music must be challenged by "offering resistance to the unfeelings embedded [within them]."

The resistance offered in *Mouvement (Vor Der Erstarrung)*, translating as *Movement (Before Paralysis)*, is fundamentally structural. Attempts made by the material to evolve into large scale, sweeping statements are constantly foiled as it disintegrates, rendered impotent by paralysing motor rhythms that overwhelm everything else. Beethoven's ideal of largescale structure growing organically is turned on its head. This is music that develops through discontinuity. The obsessive tick-ticks of paring woodblocks, the rude snorts of brass and ricocheting snags are realised with considerable drive and panache by Klangforum Wien under Hans Zender. The sputzal trumpet call that rains things in near the end has never sounded so volatile and the performance ends with an organic display of extreme textures and spluttering sounds – a perfect meeting of minds between composer and ensemble.

On the same disc, the solo piano *Serenade* was completed in 2000 and is played here by its dedicatee, the Japanese pianist Yuiko Sugawara (who also happens to be Mrs Lachenmann). At last year's Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Lachenmann spoke about his concept of utilising everything the piano has to offer including the wood, the sound of the pedals and harmonics. Much of the music in *Serenade* happens in the hairy cracks between dense clusters and fragmented runs, as Lachenmann explores the resonating possibilities of trapping sounds through the use of the sostenuto and sustaining pedals. It's music of colossal ambition, and Sugawara honours her husband's requests with dazzling mental and physical energy.

On the other CD Sugawara is joined by cellist Lucas Fells and clarinetist Shizuya Oka for an equally authoritative performance of Lachenmann's classic 1988 work *Allegro Sostenuto*. The composer builds what he considers to be a 'meta-instrument' out of the natural resonances of his trio. The piece starts



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with common chords that unexpectedly spring from textures, while cadences take wrong turnings as the music builds into an enormous half hour structure. Relying on little more than the underlying echoes of the relationship between clarinet, piano and cello, he eliminates any possibility of 'unfree' structures.

LALI PUNA
SCARY WORLD THEORY

MORR MUSIC 029 CD/LP

BY JOHN MULVEY

It was only a matter of time before the ambitious Weilheim collective of musicians clustered around Markus Achter worked their way around to pop. Achter's group Tied & Tickled may hybridize jazz and electronics. The Netwörk piece those influences into an avant rock context; Console and Village Of Savoonga add respectively in 'light' and 'dark' sample-led music. But Lali Puna draw on the subtlety and grace that unite most of this experimental scene's musical projects, and pursue them to more conventional ends.

If Scary World Theory is essentially synth-pop, it's far removed from the 80s revisions that continue to inflate iron-clad fashionites. Lali Puna - the treeline Achter, alongside keyboardist Rolfus Zimmer, Tied & Tickled drummer Christoph Bremner and, crucially, singer Valeria Trebelsahr - specialize in a kind of luring accessibility. Emerging out of bobbing electronic structures, their tunes are propelled by a keen rhythm section, with Trebelsahr softly intoning over the top.

The undulated momentum of many of these ten tracks reveals Tarwster's 'The Water-sample'. But where that Berlin duo rely on a sense of detachment, often sourcing lyrics from found texts, Lali Puna are much more emotionally engaging. Although at first Trebelsahr's words come over hushed and inconsequential, there's real substance in the way she and the group deal with personal politics and empowerment explicitly and successfully.

On Scary World Theory, the group's second album, Trebelsahr appears to be predominantly fixed on the idea that independent thought has the capacity to transcend the system that surrounds it. But if she召集s or counsels her listeners, she does so quietly. On paper, her lyrics may read like crass sloganising, but her gentle vocal and the music's steady pulse deliver the message by stealth rather than from the soapbox.

LANTNER/MANERI/MORRIS
VOICES LOWERED

LEO 1917 CD

BY BEN WATKIN

While saxophonist Joe Maneri gave a talk on 'microtonal improvisation' at the South Bank one year, he steered penitently close to wincing the gravitas which arts promotion relies on. Microtonal improvisation has actually existed for centuries, he explained, it's all those bad noises made when musicians play music not taught in the academy. Although Maneri studied 12-tone composition for ten years with Josef Schmidt, himself a pupil of Alton Berg, he hasn't forgotten that the people who really know music play it. His big, soft, breathy saxophone sound is alive with a sense of listening - fascination for other people's

playing - that characterises pertinent improvisation. You feel it at once on this excellent recording made by Antonio Orsi at the WBUR Radio Studio in Boston last year. Nevertheless, Maneri's technical understanding of the liberties taken by blues and jazz players does make a difference. On two tracks here, Steve Lantner plays two piano tuned a quarter-tone apart. On 'Dusty Dances', he introduces a crazy, jangly feel, which suits Joe Maneri's Sheep-like groan on tenor and Joe Morris's pointillist guitar. After three more and two duets with Maneri and Morris, Lantner performs two tracks unaccompanied, as if reflecting on what the others have played. When he returns to the paired piano-tenor pairs, he recaptures the ringing, swinging feel of the intro works. Jokes aside, there is something to Maneri's 'microtonal' theory of jazz.

Voces Eovana is an apt description of this music. The three musicians first at mighty rhythmic forces, but keep them in their heads. The few notes to escape are dramatically sparse. Maneri is skilled at isolating one element of a multiphonic blade, then pushing it into an intimate lyrical moment. When Morris lets out, you miss his sense of a blue groove, his tight Coal-clip motifs which up the tension. His notes are strikingly pure, with no swirl of tonal style to fog the note releases.

When all three play, the music ripples and bubbles. They are cognisant of each other harmonically, but only in the instant. This sensation of mobile foundations is exhilarating or disturbing, according to your response to Maekawa's demand for a midsize art with its feet planted firmly in the air. Traditional virtues - well-tuned instruments, a perfect ear, deliberate harmony or dissonance - are used to relate to each other's playing rather than to an overarching schema. This jazz is cool and undemonstrative, yet the freedoms it opens up are as dizzying as any breached by the bluster school.

YOSHIO MACHIDA
HYPERNATURAL #2

SDFTL MUSIC 80101 CD

BY DAVID ELLIOTT

Yoshio Machida's last album, *Hypernatural* (1999), came in a black box with photos and a feather. His second, produced by Aki Ochiai, comes in an ingeniously wrapped sleeve which conceals as it deconceals. Is that how you understand the title cover? Unwrap it and you'll never get it back together again. This is a typical Machida play. His music and photographs - though the title the cover's by someone else - are slow to reveal their inner selves. The theme of *Hypernatural*, he says, is "transparent existence", or "the relativity and the continuity between phenomena in the area of unconsciousness and consciousness". That is, the eight pieces recorded here are akin to some investigations of chosen sites in time and space. No, the concept's not new, but Machida handles it intelligently and sensitively. In some ways, *Hypernatural* #2 parallels Hazards' *Wind* and the work of John Duncan, Russell Mills and Ian Wilson, in its sourcing of nature sounds. "Potential" ripples a metallic undercurrent through running water. Taped in Ghana, "Makara" is reminiscent of Enya's field recordings for *On Land*. "Radiant Wind",

meanwhile, is the sound of a gently struck Vietnamese gong going away on a breeze. It doesn't originally - Machida subduely employs piano and organ, and his interest in Korean software is evident.

STEVE MARTLAND

HORSES OF INSTRUCTION

BLACK BOX BBM103 CD

BY LOUISE GRAY

When Steve Martland first burst on the contemporary music scene with an album on Factory's shortlived Classical imprint in 1989, the fury of attention he aroused accentuated the energetic nature of his music. Following in the tracks of his mentor Louis Andriessen, Martland's early work was certainly post-minimal. But if the orchestral ingénue of say, Babu Yar or its companion work *Orchid* had an indelible mark in Shostakovich's symphonies, he had also learned something about accessibility from Michael Nyman's *Composers' Blend*, *Last Jockey* et al.

12 years on, the nine pieces dating from 1986-1998 on *Horses Of Instruction* reveal that Martland's compositional style has lost none of its old vigor, even as it has matured. Originally commissioned for The Bang On A Can All-Stars, the title piece's fiercely rhythmic nature is here realised by the 11 piece *Messing* Band anchored by a drummer. His structures are sound, if not exactly new - short, expressive phrases doused with flicketing rhythms - but his imaginatively worked variations mark them out as modern. Martland's minimalist moments rarely pull the listener into a state of reverie, and when they do, staccato brass stabs usually act as an alarm call.

What makes this disc so compelling is the musical range it explores. *Reverie* (1996) has a dangerous undercurrent of cross-rhythms and a fuzzy guitar. Dance motifs assert and modern crop up throughout the collection, but also for quieter moods. The brass on *Mr. Andersen*, Pavane have a stately movement with a very English melancholia, while *Kick* - essentially a series of five violin-led variations on a folk theme - has an unfussy, modal party. The longer *Boat*, *The Retreat* and *Stowaway* show how Martland's gift on his material is grounded in his flexible imagination. In all, an excellent return.

MATTIN/PRÉVOST/PARLAME

SAKADA

VM010102 CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

Music is hard enough to write about but this release is especially resistant. The postcard sized cardstock sleeve has minimal information, simply noting that all compositions are by the trio, and that the disc was recorded at the LMC Studios in March this year. Percussionists Eddie Prevost and Rosy Parlane produce sounds subjected by Mattin to computer software, creating a near industrial soundscape. Electroacoustic and industrial noise is becoming pervasive in European improv. I don't think it's a technophobe's lament to say that this creates some critical problems. Technologists can throw sounds around quickly and effectively, creating interesting sonic events, but it's hard to assess their impressiononal process. The danger of

creating a kind of musical sludge from improvisers' individual efforts can result in formless and tonless music.

The recording is divided into four unitled tracks. The first rapidly becomes overpowering in its visceral, low end assault. The second begins as gently impressionistic, with high frequency white-ish noise, the first part continues the explosion of high frequency sounds. To say I won't be playing it often isn't a criticism; this is an awesome soundworld, to be listened to sparingly.

MR LEN

PITY THE FOOL: EXPERIMENTS IN THERAPY BEHIND THE MASK OF MUSIC WHILE HANDING OUT DUMMY SMACKS

MAPADOR CLE9922 CD932LP

BY RICHARD HENDERSON

"What's the word, Mr Len?" asks Broadly Brown of the Juggalos. His铺户 responds by slinging up Broadly's voice and tossing the shards between the speakers like so many maracas. On his premise solo effort *Pity The Fool*, the conceptual malnapping at the heart of Company Flow gets to dice many of hip-hop's more acerbic voices, including Chubb Rock, D-Stazy, Mr Live (of Get These) and Jean Grae. Nearly all of them give on-ramp ploys to his abilities behind the console, or, as in Grae's case, they dog him about his low life. Mr Len incorporates these shout-outs into the exultant guff of an album which, like James Brown's 60s stage shows, has something for everyone: radio skits, found recordings from what sounds like Len's frontrow, hardcore rap, Heavy Metal and reggae. If Mr Len has a spiritual forebather, it is most likely Prince Paul, whose playful yet deadly 'straight and the kitchen sink' production style casts a long shadow over *Pity The Fool*. Similarly, almost anything is givit for Mr Len's mill. Lennie Tristano-style piano loops mumble beneath Jean Grae's conscious rap on 'The Hurt', in counterpoint to her defiant sign-off, 'The only way I like it is raw'.

Grae reappears in high-guit, most notably on the album's centrepiece, the seven minute 'Iao Day', the chilling confession of a seemingly perfect student who opens fire on her family and classmates, set to a sepiachord organ phrase. The track's dinamycs stand in bold relief against Lord Seer's 'Girl (Get To Give It To Me)', during which the DJ quotes from The Neptunes' 'Fatty Fatty' Elsewhere, The Ascension's Q-Uique summons the ambience of arena rock over electric beats for 'Straight', and Agents Of Man work an unstoppable hybrid of Heavy Metal and beat bashing on 'Force Fed', complete with haemorrhage-inducing feedback and crushing power chords. The fizzytime Halloween theatre of Mr Live's 'Dummy Smacks' meshes well with the epic slice of dysfunctional life called 'Family Matters'. That Mr Len can fuse these disparate strands into something far coherent while vindicating the album's overarching ambitions.

NIÖBE RADIERSATZ

TOOLAB TON14 CD

BY DAVID ELLIOTT

This short but aptly named album comes across like songs broadcast from a radio

station in a parallel universe. Yet it could just as easily be a random sample, notes and all, from our own. Whichever way you approach it, there's something distinctly 'wrong' about it: its author, Cologne-based Yvonne Cornelius, samples her own voice in such a way that it appears to have been culled from old records, or it has been passed around the world, Chinese whisper style, until the source has trouble recognising it when it finally gets back to her.

"Troubles Of Sensile Life" is a muffled torch song with Goldefrapp glitches, "Radio Mexico" sets up a highly unlikely encounter between Chester and The Residents; "Everybody Shaves A Lounge" is sung by a wilyore femme fatale from the gutter of Sunset Boulevard over Martin Denny at 16pm; and the extraordinary "I Took It Off" is a broken-vessel lament amid a lo-fi noise - a perfect soundtrack for the inevitable midget scene in a David Lynch movie. At 26 minutes, it's less an album than a tantalising trailer for the big feature, hopefully coming soon...

YOKO ONO

BLUEPRINT FOR A SUNRISE PARLOPHONE PROMO CD

BY JULIAN COLEVY

Embossed in the throbong heart of Yoko One's first album in five years are two live tracks. One is a strong reading of the title song from its predecessor, *Rising*, in the course of which Yoko reveals to Japanese, the other is "MobyLury", a simple naming which tips into a wild implosion exchange with her son Sean Lennon on electric guitar. Her songwriting has never sounded more focused, but her trusty fees need not worry: Ono has not discarded the repertoire of walls, shanks and violins that she practised to the bemusement of Omerta Coleman's fans at London's Albert Hall in 1968, albeit to the dismay of Beatles fans worldwide. Rather she's found ways to incorporate those discomfiting sounds into increasingly assured song structures, adding expressive fibre to poignant private observations and acerbic political demands.

Ono's feminism provides the backbone for this varied set. "I Want You To Remember Me", a dramatic duptych that confronts male violence head-on, channels outtake into a harrowing interplay of voices, set in rock that reverberates with study Plastic One Band memories. Here it's clear how her naked voice seizes the initiative when words fail.

The world may be catching up at last with Ono's vision. Now it needs to come to terms with her song. The inaneuous melody of "Wouldn't", for instance, serves as a conduit for vitriol, its causal swing bearing a properly venomous load. "I'm Not Getting Enough" bemoans lack of personal fulfillment over a perfectly incongruous sunny reggae beat. Meanwhile, the succubus person she assumes on "Are You Looking For Me?" issues a Gothic nightmare that dissolves with alarm: suddenness into pastoral birdsong. Evidently the album is suffused with the same ironic quality that has anchored her work as a visual and performance artist for 40 years.

Celebrity of a peculiarly equivocal kind has not dulled Ono's edge, and at the age of 66 her intensity is undiminished. On "I Remember Everything" she registers less. But as its title

indicates, Blueprint For A Sunrise looks to the future with determination.

ORCHESTRA TERRESTRIAL

HERE AND ELSEWHERE

ONE STADT 05840 CD

BY KEN HOLLINGS

What remains hidden in a name? At its heart, an orchestra is a romantic organisation of tones and textures created around an almost militaristic passion for order. Conductors and field marshals have both been known to wield a mean baton. This might explain Orchestra Terrestrial's sombre obsessiveness with landmass and location, as signified at the outset with the deep swelling oscillations of "Low Definition Alpine Drift". Although there's something deeply impressive about the clear sense of discipline that holds this steady outpouring of finely tuned sounds together, it's thanks only to Richard H Kirk's interventions as producer and arranger that this project develops any kind of emotional depth or life of its own.

With the sole possible exception of Pets Waterman, no other UK producer has used rhythm quite as intelligently as Kirk over such an extended period of time and change, from the basic rock beat through hipkos, electro and dub, Ambient House and techno. Throughout his career, the continuous movement towards structure and rhythmic subtlety has characterised Kirk's recorded work, rather than the random noises, soundtrack inserts and voices that have been incorporated within it. "Enlight", for example, is a delicate mesh of sound quickly reminiscent of the more serene moments on his fine *Electronic Eye* release, or "Lagoon West" from *Virtual State* (Warp). "Kraut" and "Gitarrental" benefit from the sharp beats boldly counterposed within them; it's through the complex organisation of rhythms, rather than melody line or timbres, that Kirk approaches the achiness of the classical orchestra.

MARGRÉT ÓRNÖLFSÐÓTTIR MAR

SMINKALEYSA SM14HFSM86 CO

BY LOUISE GRAY

If memories of The Sugarcubes are still capable of sending out siren calls into the ether, it's possible that Mar, by the group's former keyboard player, may exercise some reflected allure. Margrét Órnólfssdóttir has spent her post-Sugarcubes existence scoring music for films, *Einkauf* and *Concrete Dreams* among them, and theatre. To a great extent, Mar reflects these various projects.

With Órnólfssdóttir as yet to develop a distinctive solo style (very little of The Sugarcubes' abrasive enthusiasm survives here), Mar lacks a coherent voice of her own. It veers wildly from the handbowed drums and electronic burblings of "The Ocean" to the tentatively blocked out piano chords of "Love Song". Just when a theme may develop, around sparsely treated flute and keyboard motifs, perhaps, it's washed away on a wave of electronic synthesizer effects better suited to a disc of New Age hoodlings.

Órnólfssdóttir is best when she breaks things down into their simplified components. The five tracks bandied as *Seikla Víkla* have an airy, atmospheric innocence, and Órnólfssdóttir's

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accordion solo could be a sea shanty by way of composer/improvisor Howard Skempton. But such moments are too rare. Pointless soft shoe jazz numbers, incidental fillers or even a section that recalls Kraftwerk's "Kometenmelodie" do not redeem the album.

ORTON SOCKET 99 EXPLOSIONS

MC KAI MY1 CD

BY MIKE BARONE

Discarding its first instrument, the comet, to hunch over a Powerbook, Orton Socket is the ever prolific Rob Mazurek's solo electronics project featuring contributions from Ken "Buny" Brown, John Heward and Jeff Parker, all from Chicago's Yorke/Isotope 217.2x, with Meikai label boss Jim O'Rourke joining him on the final edit. Mazurek has used treatments and electronics before to make up the numbers or colour the moods of The Chicago Underground Duo/Trio/Quartet, but his Orton Socket project reveals his kinship with the Austrian Megal label, while nodding back to musique concrète and 1970s analogue electronics.

Predominantly made up of sharp abstract electronica tableaux, close listening reveals a myriad of details lurking in the mix. Gradually emerging into earshot are the found sounds and ghosts of cues that have been edited and re-edited to the point where it is often impossible to identify either their source instruments, if any, or the processes they have been subjected to. On "Car Lights And Rain", Mazurek and Parker evoke the title image by combining pulses and a swooping white noise signal together with clusters of electronics and disturbing machine noises. "Ice Seal" shows some semblance of a conventional melodic structure with what sounds like electric piano chords pitched against a dislodged loop of human or mechanical whining and sequenced or looped synths. "Hydrogen Men" closes proceedings with an unforthcoming mélange of trickling liquid, snatches of speech and distant gongs. These are all sucked down a sink hole, which burps back electronic signals.

Making the independent sector's usual half-hearted attempt at marketing, someone has proposed Orton Socket as the vanguard of a new genre, "indiebenthic electronics", in a half-kidding tone in case the category doesn't catch on. Well, for one, it's not particularly accurate. Mazurek's deft, particularly touches convey far more than lyrical introspection.

PULP
PULP
UNIVERSAL/ISLAND CIDE109 CD/12P

BY JOHN MULVEY

For all their mainstream success in the 90s, Pulp have always stood firmly in the art pop tradition of British music, aspiring to be subversive but populist, and channelling outsider elements into traditional structures. On 1988's *This Is Hardcore*, their bitter yet entertaining meditations on fame, that impulse was most pronounced on the title track, constructed around an ostensible loop from Peter Thomas's *Raumpatiente* score.

On this seventh and superficially more organic album, they repeat the trick on "The Beat", this time sampling a sliver of Stanley Myers's score to *Ozzy*. Interesting, but hardly radical. And then

you note that Scott Walker is the album's unlikely producer. And suddenly the artificial recreation of lushness in "The Trees" implicitly references the arrangements of Walker's 60s albums.

One of the mysterious pleasures of Pulp is trying to figure out just how they convinced the elusive Walker to get involved in a project that often echoes his own music – or at least the records he was making more than 30 years ago. The jarringly, quasi-Industrial textures of his most recent song *Tat* are nowhere to be found here.

Instead, it's as if he has seized upon Pulp as the rightful heirs to his own abandoned – and often deceased – musical legacy. In which case, Walker has chosen well. Jarvis Cocker and his accomplices take a similar pleasure as the young Walker in manipulating pop to melodic extremes and simultaneously weighing it with intellectual resonances. But while Walker homaged Ingmar Bergman's *Seventh Seal*, Pulp's one overt not to cinema is the title "Wimoweh". Here, though, the group are at their very best. Taking a vivid journey through the decayed landmarks of Sheffield, they uncover the traditions and myths that provide an urban companion to pages past, like a legal, treacherous jump off a viaduct on the way home from the pub.

The use of rural imagery to put a new spin on Cocker's shrewd documentaries of life in his hometown is a dominant trope on Pulp. The undeling sentiments of "Misshapes" and "Common People" return entangled in the extended botanical metaphor of the tempest opening "Weeds". It's also one of two tracks (the closing "Sunrise" is the other) where guitarist Mark Webber, the group's most fervent avenger, propels Pulp towards a kind of blasting space rock that recalls Spinaltized. Throughout, he acts as an agent provocateur, deep inside Pulp songs, smothering the initially straightforward pop of "I Love You" with queaking distortion, or producing a silvery Knoblock ripple beneath the gamboiling "Bob Lind".

The absence of fractious electronics is a little surprising, given Cocker's and bassist Steve Mackey's close ties with I, Mornstar and Barry T from Add N To X. But Pulp formally explores its kinship with Scott Walker, right down to masking him out of its press. In "Bad Cover Version", Cocker mimics various anti-classics in his life, one of which is "The second side of 'Till The Band Comes In". Some might say that reminding their producer of the album when his barely nurtured songwriting passion visibly peeled out midway through a little insensitive, if not somewhat churlish. Except you can't help thinking Walker must agree with them wholeheartedly.

**CLAUDIO PUNTIN &
GERDUR GUNNARSDOTTIR**
YLIR

ECM 1749 CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

Icelandic violinist Gerdur Gunnarsdottir comes from a classical background, played with The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra and Ensemble Modern. As well as working in similar contexts, her Swiss partner Claudio Puntin has played with Hemnes, Pascal, Fred Frith and Dave Liebman – he also has a parallel career as

jewellery designer and goldsmith. But both players resist any obvious pigeonholing.

His acoustic duo with banjo and bass sazot, Steffen Schom reveal Puntin is capable of locking horns. But the partnership here on *Ylir* (Icelandic for winter) is non-combative. The album is described as a "musical topography" of Iceland. Gunnarsdottir's keening wognen sets the tone with the bleak theme of the title track, then plays a drone-based accompaniment while her partner elaborates on it, raising the music briefly to multifaceted intensity. She contributes wondrous vocalising on "Fanes", where the use of a whole tone scale sets up a sense of inappreciation at odds with the album's appearance of gentle and affecting, folk-inspired music. On "Each Little Step", Gunnarsdottir sings to a icelandic winter Hallóður Lárusson in a setting by Jón Hordal, a member of the Ósmundarstöð circle of the late 50s who was strongly influenced by icelandic folk music. They also drop a fast interlude and the album's mostly slow tracks, with the rhythmically insistent violin and bass clarinet multiphonics on "Peyssund" (Gallop). In this duo's unusual configuration, the icelandic *Ylir* is a unique and haunting experience.

**BHOB RAINHEY &
GREG KELLEY**

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SIGNS OF LIFE

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**DOUBLE DOUBLE
DOUBLE DOUBLE**

SPRING GARDEN MUSIC SGSM009 CD

BY DAVID KIERAN

The music of Bob Rainey and Greg Kelley, aka Boston's Nmpinga, is filled with a screaming silence. Its aural depth is totally enveloping, resonating you to the slightest sound. Their respective instruments, soprano and trumpet, amplify their breath and lip movements in such minute detail that the resulting balloon textures, long electric tones and little symphonies of wind often make for queasily disturbing listening. Nmpinga rarely raise themselves to a whisper, but when they do it sounds volatile, with the two suddenly rang towards each other from out of the blackness.

In existence for going on 20 years now, the Spring Garden Music label was first birthed to document Philadelphia sopranoist Jack Wright's many collaborations and solo recordings. Anyone who got to hear Wright's great solo disc, *Free Life Singing*, from a few years back was floored by his lusty, primitive technique. *Signo Of Life* pairs Wright with Bob Rainey, and also features contributions from clarinetist Matt Ingalls and trumpeter Orléan Wright. The recording from their March 2000 tour, the spend yet intense set combines the explosive dialogues of The Spontaneous Music Ensemble with microtonal detail. You can hear the instruments vibrate as they collide and kiss in mid-air, blissfully smacking. Orléan himself describes it as "like a kitten being born in a shoebox. In a Clark's closet". On Double Double Rainey and Wright play tag with cellists Fred Lohberg-Holm and Bob Marsh, the slow gnawing scope of the two cellos draw the duo out of the shadows somewhat, encouraging Wright to

bore some dusty lines while Ramey sucks up big hyperventilated gulps, the tire, explosive steps Ramey and Wright take into the depths of sound consciousness with their various projects have produced some of the most idiosyncratic and challenging 'jazz' you're likely to hear.

THE SCAVENGER QUARTET WHISTLING FOR LEFTOVERS (MUDWIGA/PHONETIC NO NUMBER CD)

BY KEITH G. THOMPSON

The Scavenger Quartet are Doug Gourdin on drums, Tim Holmes on tenor and soprano basses, bassist Joel Peterson and Frank Pahl on a list of instruments too long to mention. Pahl (see *Bites*, The WIRE 208) makes musical instruments, many of them automated or at least semi-automatic. For example he makes

gamblers from blown-up propane gas cylinders and has made an automatic marimba with beaters made from plastic Tinkertoys. All of the compositions are by Pahl and they display a wonderful diversity of approach and disregard for convention.

To describe *Whistling For Leftovers* as quirky may suggest a slight, novel music, which this most certainly is not. Much of it is rhythmically complex and tonally challenging, "Leftovers" sounds like an odd concession of jazz, Western steel guitar and rockabilly, while "The Persue Side Of Those Arguehhs" and the aptly titled "Delirium Waltz" are deceptively complex in construction. The latter is the high point of the CD. At more than 16 minutes, it meanders through fractured waltz times and languid rubato passages, while at the four minute mark, it introduces a tune that is hauntingly simple.

BOGDAN RACZYNSKI

MY LOVE/I LOVE

REPRISE CAT1119 CD

BY JOHN MURVEY

Patosis is, for the most part, anathema to the IMO community. The naked confessional is something to be abandoned as soon as, an exemplar of pre-revolutionary decadence. One that sits ill, in fact, with electronics' implicit conviction that music can make profound connections because of either then in spite of the removal of messy personal detail from the equation. A Pole currently based in Canada, Bogdan Raczyński has always been one to buck the rules. His personality has always seemed large in a portentously erratic career, with his paging, holeing and splenetic drill 'n' bass shows moving from pranksterism to often visceral catharsis.

Marking a new level of saigonism even for Raczyński, *My Love/I Love* is programmed, at least in part, to discomfort his detractors more than ever. The CD sleeve comes loaded with blunt signifiers: Raczyński lying naked with his best vulnerable puppy starred aimed direct at the camera; the 17 tracks are all carefully titled "My Love/I Love" in his best childlike handwriting.

Even for those willing to indulge him, it may be a little too much to stomach. But the music within amply justifies his crude, look at me' tactics. Raczyński takes the playground metodosi peculiar with many of his contemporaries, fragments them, detunes them and then sings them over them. Clearing its music for "crying and loving" leaves the listener unclear how naive or disingenuous some of *My Love/I Love* really is. Nevertheless, its half-finished air gives it a striking air of spontaneity, allowing

Size Matters

3", 7", 10" and other misshapes

Alway/Joe Petta split single (Organ Of Cars 27") comes as part of a package with a CD, but that's no reason to kick off from this issue of a 1977 Los Angeles Free Music Society 45, recorded by Potts with vocals by Vetsa. Like much of the best material from that collective, Alway's music is a crude concoction, combining a massive concrète approach with garage experimentalism in a way that is really distinctive. Looped rockon and muddy found sounds being around in the ether, while Vetsa works herself up like a Martha Veluzi automaton caught in an electrical storm. Bodacious.

Art Ensemble of **Kaponga** are a mysterious New Zealand whose sound is a truly demented dervish on the principles of Captain Beefheart's Magic Band. Their *The Right Furniture Explosion* (Truly Fine Critze TIC # lathe-cut 7") recalls some of the things that Pelt has done in live performance, but it really has a wap and wail all its own, as additional titles "Everyone's A Messy Expert" and "Kung Fu Sawing" bear out. It sounds a lot like that legendary roomful of monkeys figuring out Trout Mask Replica in bits and pieces. Who would have dared guess that such success would be theirs?

The Doo-Dooettes' *Howe On A Frozen River* (Organ Of Cars 29") is another one of those deals where you are forced to buy a CD just to get the single, but hey – it's a good one. Here, The Doo-Dooettes are featured in their early line-up of Tom Rechion, Jim Gomez, Fredrik Nilsen, Dennis Quack and Rick Potts doing a tune from *Frost IV* for a fashion show in Pasadena in 1978. They do such a fine and goofy job holding onto and extending the song's basic riff that listeners can only sit and wonder how these models must have pranced. Imagine.

Dwelling Louna are a German duo whose Cheap Dynamite For Expensive Silence EP (Dione OR47 7") couples two pieces of assemblage for guitars, drumheads and tapes. Without resorting to beats, they create distinct,

haunting landscapes. One appears to be a deserted street in a South American jungle town, down which they're pulling a set of chattering dentures on a string. The other finds the pair inside a big globe trying to distract poor bears with bass sounds. It works for me.

Eraser Erine are a young female group from San Francisco who combine the unusual bawng-ug of ho Wavery with the nicely stung shouting of early Rough Trade outfitts such as Kleener and The Raveonettes. Reports are that they're ferocious live and the wonderful plots of their great debut, *Cat And Canary* (Inconveni-Press & Records INV001 7") is guaranteed to make listeners keen for more. An album is due soon, but this will certainly do for now.

New Zealander **Alastair Galbraith's Orbital** (*Crashwave* SPNC0007 7") is not brand new, but it took a while to track down. Galbraith is one of the best known and most talented artists to emerge from the first Flying Nun era, and this 7" is a fine addition to his discography. The 7" issue moves with the dark menace of what some call John Cole might have added to Ennio's *Here Come The Warm Jets*. The B-side *Bed-Soup Dream From The Empire* is even steeper, letting the whispered vocals claw their way through a lattice of backwards guitars in a way that suggests something momentous is going on right around the corner. A beautiful record for the dead centre of the night.

Tokyo-based guitarist **Naoaki Miyamoto** has some connection with the Acid Mothers Temple crowd, but sleuthing has turned up very little solid information. As the title says, *Live At 20000V #1* (*Public Eyes* 23 7") was recorded live and features pretty dizzying waves of solo guitar riffs with occasional vocal gurgles. Fired near to the early solo work of Keiji Haino, it will not collapse under the heavy mantle of brotherhood.

Taking of all things brotherly, **Megwai and Barde Pond** split a special 10" between them, (*Mistador* OLE922 10"), which was only sold on

their joint tour. The Mogwai songs, "D To E" and "Drum Machine", are pretty beacons in a light, gay way and are precisely what they are: mopey. *Blade Pond* offer "Despite The Roar (In Spite Of Themselves) Attemate Take", one of their sweater folk-based compositions that runs headfirst into a wall of "little deaths" They follow that with "Highlands", a slow crawl through a sparsely lit space cavern. And another tour is wrapped up.

New Robot are an instrumental outfit of legendary sub-wave pioneers XIRX and the six untitled songs (*Nothing Fancy Just Music no number one-sided 7"*) constituting this first single are a bit less forcefully fucked than their parent group's insane spew. Instead, they have a strange charm all their own. The basic premise seems to be the deconstruction of every 16th eret Lucy Mercer Descloux's riffs, as handled by extreme lo-fi monkeys all upped on or something real Southern. "Jim On The Move", my black ass.

Peripherians are an Italian folk group who sound something like Howlin Castle in a certain mood. *Lefteess Of My Biological Clock* (Janzen JER099 7") is sweet layers of acoustic guitar, interspersed with electric leads and languid vocals. They split the single with **Stanion** with **Staff Giacomo's Fortune Eyes**. The once and future leader of Howlin Castle, Giaconne here from the cleaner pop stylings of Stanion. After the extreme achoo and cosmic confusion of Stefano's recent releases, this is surprisingly uplift. It almost sounds like one of Rio Reinc's groups. Classical, but scrubbed.

Once again, anyone who wants **Ja Potts's** Mother/Daughter (*Organ Of Cars* 28 7") must buy a CD in order to get this morsel of a rare LAFMS single, but such is life. Originally issued in '77, the Potts track is another fine collision with Vetsa. Rock as rock is forced into the pit of experimentalism and we all go home winners. The same the single is split with **Slimy Admired And The Pubbins'** *The Residents*, wherein Chaz Chapman takes a more pale at the gear. Eyeballs from 444 Grove Street (as he would do again with *Under My Gums*). At times, it's almost points in the direction of Half Japanese, and if that's not fine, well, what is?

Vid's Perfect Strangers 9/76 Reperfct (*Scotch & Sniff Entertainment* SNS1011 7") is more difficult to describe pleasure from the

depths of the Michigan underground – already due to sue gone felches as *Universal Indians*, *Wolf Eyes*, et al. The title is inhomogeneous electronics, and there are something like beats, pulsars at times, but the results remain completely non-offensive by sounding like some purplish American miasma to the first Normal 45 or something. One can only guess that the cough syrup in Kalamazoo is even stronger than that found in Houston.

UK based electro duo **Flaach** take Four Tet's jumping and paste approach and stamp all over it with some totally squelching machinery. On *Amnes* (Advance Recordings EP004 12" + 7") they sound like a cartoon Rothko, spending up the MS before skidding to a halt amidst some toybox drum 'n' bass rhythms. *Nagisa MI* is an epic prep-synch duo from Osaka, whose music run deep into the Japanese underground. They were formed in '92 by multi-instrumentalist Shiryu Shibusawa and his partner Masako Tieda after Shibusawa split from the Halekyahs, a great misandrist folk outfit whose solo LP has been released on CD by PSE. Shibusawa also has connections with Maher Shahid Bass, having played as part of the group and running Org, the label responsible for Maher's sprawling *Return Visit To Rock Massa box set*. They (*Geographic* GEGD10 7") is a taster for Geographic's forthcoming Shibusawa retrospective, *Songs For A Simple Moment*, and it's an absolute monster. Starting off with the most unassumingly acoustic tinkering, it explores in a telecolored wash of acid guitar, massed vocals and student percussion, frogmarching antemic Beanie folk out into the stratosphere. The B-side is an otherwise uninvolved take of *Me, On The Beach*, from Nagisa's 1995 *On The Love Beach* album, this time with Masaka on vocals and a few crunching chords.

As an easy rule of thumb, the quality of a record can be inversely measured against the prior prettiness of the packaging. Folded into four mainly black panels, *Stephen Jones's* 1985-2001 (Amber CO1-3 3X3" CD) certainly looks stupidly gorgeous. Indeed, you could pass the set off as a replacement doily-pack for your grannie, who might even get over her disappointment that its 24 vinyl pieces are as shallow as her cover and Jones's *Baystate* hit that financed it. Reviewed by Tony Caley and David Keenan

The Compiler

New compilations reviewed, rated, reviled

"Ever since the first shepherd heard two flute or horn players from distant hills in different directions, there must have been an inkling that music's fate was to become a spatial art." So says the whimsical Kyle Gann, New Music critic of the Village Voice in his note to *Invocations* (Blankerd S2010 040) which contains 14 works especially commissioned to show off the possibilities of surround sound. Gann argues that Berio, Nono, Ives, Cage and Stockhausen all experimented with placing instruments either offstage or around the concert hall and the composers here are using their technological savvy to produce a sense of the art spatial music. The difference is that Berio and the rest had something of substance to say and their interest in spatial effects grew out of their overall philosophical approach. Although some of these pieces create an intriguing atmosphere (Lukas Ligeti's Propeller Island) and others are charming (Paul Dolden's Twelfth Dance and Phil Kline's The Housatonic At Henry Street), much of the project feels woefully lightweight. Given the potential of the superior technology there's nothing to really amaze the ears and certainly not a hint of the wondrous idealism that inspired the likes of Ives and Cage. Surround sound itself is a mere effect and can't rescue pieces that are weak conceptually and aesthetically. Immersion may be a ringing endorsement for technology, but what happened to art? Well, at least they didn't take advantage of a DVD Audio's capacity to store eight and half hours of music.

• Out of all the software we use to play our music, none is as problematic as the original cylinder. While you can't beat a 1908 Edison Standard phonograph for authenticity, what comes out of the horn is usually wobbly and erratic, susceptible to every nuance of the machine. 28 precious cylinder recordings – by many of the most important British music hall performers of the period, starting with Phil Ray's 'The War Of The Coon Singer' in 1903 and getting as far as George Formby Senior's 'At The

Castle Walk Last Night' (1911) – are collected on *Gene Where They Don't Play Billsants* (Cyldec 501 CD). Most cylinder transfers, to either LP or CD, have hitmen sounded little better than an indifferent dubbing. Here, though, Dennis Combe has done an amazing job smoothing out inconsistencies of speed and getting a beautiful, ringing tone out of most of the originals. It's only when you hear a photograph that you realise why the early players were called "talking machines": they really seem to speak to you, and that immediacy, which frightened many of our ancestors, is honoured in this remastering. If you want to know where British popular music began, long before jazz and dance music, then you need to study this material, most of which was already being described as "popular songs". There are character comedians like Will Evers and Sam Mayo, quickfire patter from the incomparable Mark Shandian, patetic belters like Hamilton Hill; the peerless male impersonator Vesta Tilley; vaudevillian players such as Jack Pearsants and Ben Lovens; the turn-cork eccentric singer GH Chirgwin, and a genuine black performer, Pete Hammon. Henry Champion's superb 'Pity Myself, I Don't' needs to be heard to be believed, detailing his troubles with his friend's wife's wooden leg and a bottle of hair restorer. Tony Barker, Britain's leading music hall collector/historian, has given us an irresistible treat with this first release on Cyldec, with more promised for the future.

Hopefully, there are no more obscure Birt psychodelic releases promised for the future. *Acid Drags, Spaceland & Flying Saucers* (EMI 535078 4XCD), compiled by the Myo team, is the same old tired collection of two gits in Flipsy babsing their time until they could unclench their Bach chops and still get laid for it, and multinational capital would play for their tax return in the Bahamas. You know the deal: church organs, creamy Mellotrons, Alad Jones harmony on top of ironed fuzz, dippy guitar leads, phased nasal vocals, skipping chimes, screeching female divas with tin whistles. That said, there's some pretty good stuff from The

Flies and The Sorrows, but the best part of this hideously overlong release is the last song, Sam Gopal's "Escalator". Sam Gopal may have been the Malaysian-born leader of the group, but "Escalator" is notable for the presence of Ian Wilkin, perhaps better known as Lemmy Kilmister, who wrote and sang this splendid piece of aggro psych with tables. Motörhead aficionados should track this down for the first instance of Lemmy's "born to lose" schtick. "If you think you like me / my baby / you're gonna love me when I'm dead" (Hawke) and eat your heart out.

The Three Angels: Original Beat Poetry (BBL BGSW001 CD) chronicles the last meeting of Alles Ginsberg, Peter Orlovsky and Gregory Corso in May 1992. While Corso sounds like he's degenerating before your ears, Orlovsky is in speaking form, full of New York charm as he recounts tales of jerking off on his cat and clearing up its vomit. Ginsberg, of course, is his usual soft-spoken, self-deprecating self, willing to be carried off to "the worm farm". BBL is a label that specialises in funk and Hip-Hop releases, so the spare setting, with no new beats meets the original Beats' aesthetic, is to be commended.

Based in a converted Tokyo taxi depot, Delice doubles up as a studio for architects, designers, DJs and a beer company, plus an event space for exhibitions, parties and concerts. It's a small enough space but over the last two years or so has become semi-legendary for its series of improvised music gigs, impeccably curated by koto player Brett Larner and friends. *Delice Improvisation Series Vols 1 & 2* (ASE ASED1/ASED2 2XCD) are live documents from 2000 and 2001 respectively and cover a phenomenal range of styles, from a clever sex workout by Evan Parker to Sachiko M and Toshimaru Nakamura's 'nothing's there' minimisation on Vol 2. The highlights of Vol 2 include Carl Stone, Isaothi Ferreira, Yoshikide Otao, Elliott Sharp and Taku Sugimoto. If I Saul Kane's Best Classic (1997) was Flipp's Nuggets and last year's Egg Trips' Big Payback was its Pebbles, then *Review World: The Sound Of The Big Apple Rapper* (Heroes & Villains promo CD) is Hip-Hop's Back From The Grave Vol 1. Compiled by Bimbo producer Mark B, Harlem World collects some of the rarest platters from way, way back in the day, records that Afrika Bambaataa himself probably hasn't even heard. While nothing here really extends the Old School format beyond Grandmaster Flash or Spoonie Gee, the personality and je ne sais quoi are the equal of anything on Sugarhill or Enjoy Harlem World Crew. (On Dr Jeckyl and Mr Hyde on the mix) comment on the Iranian hostage crisis on "Rappers Convention"; TJ Swartz's "And You Know That" lives up to its legendary status on the collector's scene (shoeshine epsilon doo, Dr Jeckyl and Mr Hyde, under their own name, rock Bob James's "Nautilus" break on "Doing The Do", the ultra-concise Rapattical 5 talk about how reliable their rapper Rapper is; and radio DJ Mr Magic gets loose on a kazoos solo before Grandmaster Flash And The Furious Five sampled Freedon's "Get Up And Dance".

"With most histories, the history of the excavation has largely ignored the role played by women," according to Gilles Torthier's sleeve-note for *Les A Du Muets: Accordeons Au Feminin* (Paris Jazz Comme Producitons PJC221007 CD). The sleeve-note compilation that settles the score was curated by Demetrie Daucis, ringmaster of Les Primitifs Du Futur. Sporting cover art by Louise Phinot, expertly camouflaged R Crumb, its contents are drawn in part upon the latter's 75-odd collection *Les A* – encompasses a range of moods, from Raymond Scott-styled whining parLOUR jazz recalling the Hot Club Of Paris. The journées of union lines, shared by Simone Bataille's accordions and her xylophone, accompanied by the skill required to negotiate the harpier curves of melodies such as "Belleville" and "Parfums D'Espagne". These women are unfurled in their unabashed love of free-reed mouthpieces, their carefully prepared recordings evoking "the memory of a time when... the accordions did not have to be stashed".... Reviewed by Philip Clark, Richard Cook, David Elliott, Richard Henderson and Peter Shapiro

A Delice improvisation from Taku Sugimoto



Raczyński to get away with his dithering vocals and lyrics.

Better yet are the tracks where nastaga sings through, with Raczyński tumultuously employing the phantoms of folk music – live accordions and trumpets, chiefly – to score his shuffling, unstable pieces. The emotional content is all the more powerful for being less overrought, as he fashions steady train rhythms to tap into a collective, possibly unreliable memory of Eastern Europe.

SCORSES

SCORSES

WHOLLY OTHER WIDE CD

BY BEN BORTHWICK

Hailing from Austin, Texas, *Scorses* are Heather and Christina, both on voice, church organ and bells. The parallel instrumentation should tell you something about the nature of their music. The two long drowsing improvisations making up this release date back to 1996, and have been re-edited “to thicken the dense earful fog evoked therein”. The first track, “Holding”, opens with a series of sustained chords that bring to mind the mystical materialism of John Fahey. It is difficult to deassociate the chord organ from a religious context, which, presumably, is one of its attractions for *Scorses*. The deeply meditative and drawn out music espouses to the kind of focused inner awareness that has been the domain of religious observance down the centuries. 16 minutes in, the arrangement thins to just one chord; the introduction of a second heightens the concentration. Sung chords add texture to the drones, which begin to modulate, lose stability and then recover. Each recurrence of the pattern causes a minor shift, and by the 25th minute, the music’s tones have been transformed from the meditative to the stark. “Breathing Throats” opens with a very different set of vibrations, sounding like an accordian group warming up. The ripples fall into synch, ebong and flowing in short, sharp beats. After a few minutes of tuning my breathing to its rhythm I felt myself entering a state of oxygen deprivation, which may explain its lasso into farce halfway through, when the tinkling of bells starts up over heavy organ, and Heather and Christina warble like hysterical ghosts from a 1930s horror movie. Eventually the goss breaks down to just the voices, from which point it can never recover.

MARCUS SCHMICKLER

PARAM

A-MUSIC 2CD

BY CHRIS SHARP

The kind of people who like to trace the proliferating pseudonyms of German electronic no doubt feel a tisson of exultation at unmasking them like the one, which sees the Cologne-based composer and seal collaborator Marcus Schmickler making a rare outing under the name on his birth certificate. In recent years, Schmickler has recorded Ambient rock rock as Platzen (with Jan St Werner and Jaki Liebezeit, amongst others), and astringent digitalia as Welt Sabi and Satar Rots, as well as taking up membership of the conceptual electroacoustic improv collective Mimo (alongside Rafael Torz, Christian Feuerher and Keith Rowe, among others). He has also continued an interest in the more

formal composition sprouting from his academic background in contemporary music. Param collects various recordings of Schmickler’s “classical” works from 1996-2000. For the most part, it reveals a steady reengagement with the relatively benign, drifting cadences of Phrasen.

Included are pieces for pipe organ, voices and chamber ensembles of varying line-ups and textural complexity. While some also involve a judicious measure of electronic enhancement, others rely solely on Schmickler’s scoring and the acoustic of the performance space for their considerable dynamic impact. For instance, the tensely titled AS/VN constituting the CD’s counterpart stretches with a most unbearable patience across 15 minutes of fringed silence, as the music’s tangled dissonances – plucked hesitantly from piano, violin, celeste, trumpet, tuba and accorders – build with unerring precision to a remarkable pitch of tension. Schmickler’s music is nothing if not minimal. The opening Altman (for pipe organ) is little more than a fluctuating low-register drone, but it has no truck with the redemptive resonance of Riley, Glass, et al. It’s closer to a fusion of the eerie tonality of the second Vienna school (this music is suffused with a palpable central European bleakness) and the mournful sparseness of Morton Feldman or Earle Brown.

Which is to say that Schmickler’s compositions lack colour or drama. The plucking piano chord and buzzing strings that open Friedl Krieger are as propulsive as a thriller score, while the nasal, quivering, motion of 22 Gliders, for string quartet and electronics, is as intensely intense as it is wildly exhilarating. For all its obliqueness, and its willy-nilly unattractiveness, Param is a tour of sonic daring.

**THE SILVER MT ZION
MEMORIAL ORCHESTRA &
TRA-LA-LA BAND**
BORN INTO TROUBLE AS THE
SPARKS FLY UPWARD
CONSTELLATION CS118 CD/2XLP

SET FIRE TO FLAMES
SINGS REIGN REBUILDER
PAT CAR 1901 CD/2XLP

BY JOHN MILROY

Writing in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, the veron of a burning world populated by the Godspeed You Black Emperor! camp suddenly has an unhappy presence. Here, once again, are two related projects characterised by a familiar emotional arc: beginning in desolation, cataloguing thwarted opportunities, and failures and, finally, finding one last try, just about unspeakable fragment of belief in the human spirit.

Elsewhere, the guitars and guiding force behind this newly expanded, six piece Silver Mt Zion crew, is the most student architect of this worldview. He’s the one who tries hardest to articulate the motivating anguish behind Hotel 2 Tonga’s projective, who ventures to put into words the sadness and disgust his music expresses so eloquently. The first Mt Zion album, He Has Left Us Alone But Starts Of Light Sometimes Grace The Corner Of Our Rooms, was

only intermittently successful – a chamber reduction of Godspeed’s widescreen broil with a few parched lyrics.

But *Born Into Trouble...* is far superior, beginning with the beautifully written, justifiably confused sedentary pamphlet included in the package, characteristically titled, “On The Failure Of Our Small Community In Achieving Its Own Ill-Defined Dreams And/Or Goals”. Yet, for all its grace, this is hardly subtle music. After the shredding crescendos of “Take These Hands And Throw Them In The River”, with Ethri’s pernicious howl about “cup cars on every corner”, there’s a long interlude of binaural. At times, when the usual solemn string passages have unwind, they lie over some strange conventional rock songs, with the vocals often resembling Neil Young or Built To Spill’s Doug Martsch. One wishes for a more concrete agenda and the odd solution rather than so many tortured admissions of failure. But the perverse uplift these musicians are frequently capable of has never been better showcased than on “C’mon Come On (Loose An Endless Longing)”. With its hon voluntary and a guitar skree recalling Kevin Shields at his most vitreous, it makes a lunga towards the light.

Set Fire to Flames bring together 13 players from the Monroe scene (minus Ethri but with most of Godspeed), alongside members of Fly Pie Am, Hanged Up and more) consailed by Godspeed’s guitarist David Bryant. Five days of intense composition, improvisation and field recordings (Bryant calls this “audio fishing”, a compulsive need to record sh*t”) were, unusually for this analogue collective, processed and edited on computer to produce Songs Reign Rebuilder. Again, it’s impossible to hear Set Fire to Flames without thinking Godspeed, particularly on the slowly momentous “Shit-Heap-Glaze Of The New Town Planning”, a wordless attack on Montréal’s urban regeneration that inspires so much horror from the group.

For the most part, though, the bulk of musicians are exceptionally talented at making themselves scarce. There’s a ghostly ambience to many of the pieces, with atonic guitar atmospheres circling over urban chitter, crackle and distant machine grind. In common with both Godspeed’s aesthetic and Ethri’s bemused theorie, Songs Reign Rebuilder conveys a sense of being part of the world but disconnected from it. Potent forces in isolation, for sure, but perhaps what makes their parent group so compelling is the collision of dislocated melancholy and righteous indignation.

TERRE THAEMELIT
OH, NO! IT’S RUBATO – PIANO
INTERPRETATIONS OF DEVO
MILLE PLATEAUX MP103 CD

BY PETER SHAPRO

Despite their frothy-like shenanigans and pranks, Devo and their die-evalution schtick, perhaps more than anyone else, represented new wave’s emasculation of pop music. You can say what you like about all the British post-Bowie pretty boys, but they were really only earlier versions of LA’s late 80s hair Metal boys who wore their Mom’s make-up to get the girls. Devo followed Suicide’s castration of garage rock’s Farfisa thrust, and made it even more trebly, more stunted, more nasal (or straight out of the



MS - BETWEEN GAPS' PHARAOH CO
Another wonderful variation of the source which has a more
“ethereal” feel. The music is more “spiritual” and vocal
not so much as in defining a broad dynamic level structure
12 tracks unboxed CD 10” music video



ADULT - PHARAOH CO 12” music video
The presence of 100’s parts, the movement of 100’s
microcosm is the source interplay. In a technical way, one will agree
that the song of Adult is impossible to ignore



TECHNIQUE 2 101 PHARAOH CO
It is our second album and a follow-up to the first album. The
first track is “Technique 2 101”, the second track is “Technique 2 102”
and the third track is “Technique 2 103”. The album consists of 100’s
different takes on the same source material. Technical design with
play of change, walking, dancing... interesting 100’s



TYPICAL CATS - TYPICAL DES GALAISSES' PHARAOH CO
Mille Ours, Sorex & Deneuve-Kane. Gérard Koenig (Philippe Bois)
“TYPICAL CATS” is the first release of the “TYPICAL” series.
The “TYPICAL” series is a collection of 100’s tracks, 100’s
images and 100’s lyrics. Protagonist lyrical concept is a mix
energy and thoughts meet and joining the best ideas



KYSTHES & GARY JAMES - DARK
Kysthes (Kysthes & Gary James) is the first release of the “TYPICAL” series.
The “TYPICAL” series is a collection of 100’s tracks, 100’s
images and 100’s lyrics. Protagonist lyrical concept is a mix
energy and thoughts meet and joining the best ideas



CANTUS PHARAOH CO
Another wonderful representation
of the “TYPICAL” series

CANTUS PHARAOH CO
12” music video
100’s parts, 100’s images and 100’s
lyrics. The source interplay. In a technical way, one will agree
that the song of CANTUS is impossible to ignore

The Boomerang

New reissues rated on the rebound



Top: Radio Birdman

An album dedicated to *Annette Peacock* has to be a worthwhile undertaking, especially if it features her own compositions performed by players who know her and her music as intimately as former husbands Paul Bley and Gary Peacock clearly do. *Annette* (Hatrology 564 CD) was actually instigated by trumpeter Franz Koglmann, who brought the pianist and bassist together for the 1992 trix session (the material), which includes "Touching", "Cartoon" and "Mister Joy", may have been a cornerstone of Bley's repertoire over the years, but the album does not simply meet expectations. It's quite sparse, neither oblique and even low key, but repeated listening brings the group and the compositions into sharper focus and it doesn't seem too fanciful to suggest that it reveals something of the mercurial personality of the woman behind the veil on the cover.

Emerging during the Industrial tape boom of the early '80s, Milwaukee's F/Fi worked the dark depths of powerhouse electronics before a mass epiphany turned the whole group bongwangs. *Space Mantra* (Ukulean Label LDXEV001 CD) bundles their second album from 1988, originally released on RRRecords, with their untitled debut platter, a split LP with fellow noiseniks Boy Dr. Cat. *Space Mantra*'s ultra-primitive combination of big stumping riffs, garbled vocals and tape dirt still sounds totally startling, like The Fall at their most Faustian, but there were even better things up ahead, as guitars/vocalist Richard Farneski split to form the monomous *Wockschw*. Taking their name from Abc 'loco' Hesh who produced the first Blue Cheese album, Farneski's new group took the FF/meson statement even further, building black hole jams from just one chord before tearing them to pieces with some twisted funk solos. *Aspernabors* (LDXEV002 CD) catches them at a bloodied peak, pairing their 1990 debut with their side of a split LP with F/Fi from '92.

Australia's *Radio Birdman* were named after a misheard line from The Stooges' "1970" and masterminded by ex-Ozzy rocker guitarist Dean Tek. *The Essential Radio Birdman* (Sub Pop SP563 CD) charts their beautiful nosedive from 1974-78, including the whole of their debut LP, *Radios Appear*, and the cream of the *Burn My Eye* EP and the last album, *Living Eyes*. Despite their guitar Army ethics and stage trashin' routines, Birdman were much more *Back In The USA* than *Kick Out The Jams* and they had a killer pop sensibility as highlighted on great piano-led ballads like "Breaks My Heart" and "Love Kills", the latter of which could almost pass for the E Street Band or The Coors. Elsewhere there are great high energy workouts like "New Race" and "What Gres?", plus their couch potato tribute to Hawaii Five-O, "Aloha Steve & Ossie". Still, "Descent Into The Mastodon" remains their masterpiece, all low night urban tenter out with blustery confrontational guitar noise.

On its original release in 1982, one discerning German magazine dismissed *Uva Carben's* *Tro De Jureno* (Dutermess 05114 CD) as "not music", which is recommendation enough to give her Moog-happy brand of exotic and electronic Latin rhythms a second listen. Recorded partly in Costa Rica and with Uwe Schmidt (aka Atom Heart) as executive programmer, this swinging melange of samples and models knows how to mix the familiar with the strange and rough synthesized terrain with smooth effects, even creating some suave cocktail picking from Pete Namlook on Gibson guitar.

The encounter between rock and traditional African musics has not been fortuitous, generally because of rock's tendency to Africa's determinate rhythmic patterns as exotic colonization. But Chris' drummer *Ginger Baker* has always focused on playing rather than image. In the early 70s, he lived in Nigeria to learn more about drumming. His squalid pad off with African Force (TKO-Magnum 1B207 CD), recorded live in Cologne and at a studio in

berlin, is some time in the 80s. With this group Baker managed to combine the ominous intervals of heavy rock with the in your face impact of tribal drumming. The cover photo — a horse in a sun scorched savannah oasis gain from a trailer, coils of orange plastic piping to the fore — shows a real Africa seldom glimpsed by the pop imaginary. So too the music.

*Witness' "Heavy The Observer" *Holiness** never quite seems to get the full credit it deserves as a producer. Yet his long career includes presiding over some of great moments of 1970s reggae. His productions are marked by a beautiful clarity, granite-hard rhythms and an abiding love for melody. *Amorphous Attack* 1974-78 (Blood & Fire 84737 CD) is given over to 20 material produced by Witness with crack incoherence experts named to unimpeachable backing tracks. There are voces by some of the top exponents of the genre — U-Roy, Big Youth, Ollinger and Ranking Trevor — but the star of the show is undoubtedly I-Roy, who is in superb form on tracks such as the jewel "Sister Maggie Breath", "Native Land" and the stately "Jah Come Here". His humour is often pointed. "Damp Road Skanking" has him riding the backing track to Gregory Isaacs' "Slavemaster", introducing the tune as a cockney tourist looking for prostitutes in the vicinity of an internment camp during the state of emergency that prevailed at the time.

With his usual bilious sense of humour *Jeff Buckley* probably would have dismissed his "rediscovery" the same way he lampooned the sleepiness of the 50s/60s folk revival. The rest of us, though, can simply be thankful that *Asi* continue to re-invent the catalogue of his old Tokiona label. Originally recorded in 1967, *Days Have Gone* (Takoma TAK6509 CD) may not be as famous as the Blind Joe Death albums, but it still finds Falely following an utterly idiosyncratic path: covering Shéhézade, transporting Ray Arrouf to Vaihala, dedicating acoustic ballads to cement factories, creating acoustic ragas and

generally finding more in a seemingly exhausted tradition than anyone has a right to.

Originally released in 1991, *Accelerator (Ukups' & Pamper) PROMO CD* finds *The Future Sound Of London* desperately trying to find a way out of the Haçienda moment. While still dominated by those itchy, trebly drums, rubbery synth lines and jerky dynamics, *Accelerator* attempts to take us out of the student bedpost and into the wine bar. The production values are a definite step up from *Handover's* cheap and cheerful dancings, with a better end aiming to cushion you like a bucket seat. There are a couple of post-industrial alienation numbers to be sure, but the exotic touches on "Moscow" and cocaine chink of "It's Not My Problem" bring it closer to American Psycho territory than the withdrawal of their later records, when their stated aim was to make "impostor music". Of course, the album suffers badly from the problem that brights nearly all recent electronic music: it dates faster than unrefrigerated beer in the brick hole of Calcutta, even the once rather resounding "Papua New Guinea". The accompanying CD with ten remixes doesn't help matters any.

Hard to believe that the same *Wil Malone* who was the drummer for two psychodelicists, Orange Bicycle and who later arranged songs for Seal, The Verve and Simple Minds (Masse Attack and Neneh Cherry too) is behind the moody and rather excellent soundtrack of *Death Line* (Spanner SPINNEY002 CD). The movie starred Christopher Lee and Donald Pleasance and concerned a tribe of sub-humans who lived in the London Underground and survived by eating human flesh. The main theme is in typical early 70s style, but with swinging strings replacing horns and a monotous, thundersous Moog all occupying one of the bottom-end. Listen to this and imagine Godge Street Studios will never be the same again. □ Reviewed by Julian Cowley, Ken Hollings, David Alean, Will Montgomery, Peter Shapiro and Ben Watson

head cavity rather than from the guts), more surreal then, of course, there were their fabulous deconstructions of 'authentic' music classics like 'The Rolling Stones' 'I Can't Get No Satisfaction', Johnny Rivers' 'Secret Agent Man', Lee Dorsey's 'Working In A Coal Mine' (aside from its slightly dodgy Anics 'N' Andy caricature) and The Carter Family's 'It Takes A Woman Man', that evoked any hint of funk and replaced the purgent aroma of sex with an almost clinical sterility.

Yerk yerk it may all very well have been, but their catchphrases 'Are we not men? We are Devs', with its echoes of the Island Of Dr Moreau, struck a chord among America's freaks in the bleak late 70s. Contended with the alienated synapses of Jerry Casale and Mark Mothersbaugh, this took them to a tradition of deviant electronic music that runs straight from Walter/Wendy Carlos through Syd Barrett to Tens Thirteen. It's no wonder, then, that the Deus Thaumaturgus has chosen Devs to follow Kraftwerk and Gary Numan in the Robotic series of piano interpretations of electronic classics.

As with so much 'conceptual' stuff, however, a great idea on paper is a letdown in the actual performance. If you're as familiar with Devs as many Americans of my generation, it's really amusing to hear the opening chords of 'Rock Horns' barged out on a Steinway, otherwise, even utterly recognisable tunes like 'Whip It' and 'Mongoloids' are so decontextualised and 'de-evolved' that the point and the humour is totally lost. Unfortunately, neither spuds nor spudettes will find much satisfaction here.

TO ROCOCO ROT KÖLNER BRETT

STAUBGUT 22 CD

TO ROCOCO ROT & I-SOUND

PANTONE EP
CITY SINGING 201982 CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

Köhner Brett is a cheerfully functional simple on Cologne's chysopane, a building designed by the architects bial+ last year. The structure was split into 12 separate units combining both living and working spaces. There's a heavy 'Kön' austerity to the rooms and from the outside it looks like a huge modernist sheeshka, as gyn as a public library from the early 70s. During Ambulab, an architectural exhibition held in May 2001, the German trio To Rococo Rot presented a 'musical

translation' of the Kölner Brett, now available on CD on Staubgut. Consisting of 12 three minute compositions, Köhner Brett reflects the building's architectural grid. Its attempt to raise a phantom structure that mirrors the building, while 'sounding' the individual atmospheres of the living and working quarters. It's an unqualified success. In the building itself, Köhner Brett's mammal, tactile and highly regulated, all conveyor belt rhythms and microwave pings. It relates more to bassist Stefan Schneider's solo work as Mephisto, only even more austere. While To Rococo Rot's own records soundtrack the organic urban sprawl at the heart of the modern city, they find a lot more desolate, like lonely broadcasts from the edge of town. The Pantone EP furthered their collaboration with New York DJ Sound. Recorded after their joint tour, it contains reworkings of material from Köhner Brett, and of 'Partone' and 'The Trance Of Travel' from this year's Music Is A Hungry Ghost LP; plus two unreleased tracks from the original LP sessions. 'Partone' (Red) is particularly satisfying, with new layers layered beneath bionic bass, hypnotic electronics, while a beautiful keyboard refrain echoes Körber's trans-European triks.

TROUM TJUKURPA (PART 1: HARMONIES)

TRANSGREDENT TR94 CD

BY ANDI CHAPPLER

'Tjukurpa' is one of many native Australian words translated as 'cremation' without nearly getting its meaning. These two musicians from Bremen are the word to bolster their idea of music 'as the direct path to the unconsciousness, searching for the archaic essence of the human being'. Between 1988 and 1996 they were part of Ambient Industrial guitar duo Maenr Th. As Ifraum, they use guitar, bass, accordion, wordless vocal and a great deal of echo. They apply the latter to great effect on the calming and beautiful Tjukurpa. The first of a projected trilogy, this one's dedicated to 'harmony', with 'drone' and 'pulsation' set to follow. Their sound is a hawering cloud of echoes, fringed with tibetan incantation distortion. Slow and steady folk melodies emerge from the tonal fog, often in counterpoint. With each new note forming a chord with the echo of its predecessor, Tsjum's music lies somewhere between My Bloody Valentine, during Klaus Schulze and some grand Wagnerian moment locked in an eternal loop.

ROGER VAN LUNTEREN TM-EIN

HERMELEIN ULM HEMD CD/LP

BY BEN BORTHWICK

Surprisingly for an artist who has previously released his Euro electronics on such labels as City Centre Offices, Persian and Dutchplate, the opening bars of *TM-eins*, originally a 12" that first appeared in 1999, now issued for the first time on CD with bonus tracks, have the hollow acoustics of an early Art Blakey session, full of shimmering hi-hats, double bass and spontaneous mutterings. When thick bass and emotive strings wash over the bassline, 'S1' takes on a Kruder & Dorstheimer lift. The drums occupy a distant backdrop, then push forward at the breakdown, and drop back again in a game of hide and seek that rates through the whole album. Halfway through, the prime recognition takes a radical turn as it slips into the simple staggered shards of an early Acid House breakdown, hands in the air style, which is incorporated into the rest of the track's maths. Each of these genres is already over-determined, but Van Lunteren's arrangement brings them together in unexpected and productive ways.

If 'S1' is the cleverest, most 'jaz' of this five track, the others are sixt excellent takes of downtime dance and Ambient. 'Path' moves in the direction of more straight ambient dance, as layers of beats, strings and a surging bassline unravel over ten minutes, while 'Flattery' and 'Cryolic' develop the Ambient motifs hinted at earlier. But 'Float (Full Length Version)' is the one that goes all the way back to the early 90s Ambient heyday, when Manueld Götsching's E2 Ed linked in every groove. The track slowly builds a series of phrases that, over the course of its 37 minutes, transform from oceanic drift to edgy Ambient House and back again, phasing in and out of distortion the more heavily processed and abetted it gets.

VARIOUS TELLUS TOOLS

TELLUS/HARVESTWORKS TR/PHN 22LP

BY HUKE HUKE

Given its timing and my present location – Cambridge, Massachusetts, with the deafening roar of an American jet fighter destroying the clearest blue noon of the year – it's impossible not to contrast this noisey Right now, nose – driven in all ugly shades of colour and misshape, driving, propelling slabs of noisefeeding rhythm and pure, bludgeoning sound

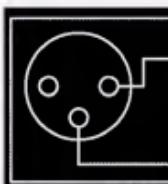
that is devoid of emotion – feels like the only place to find stable meaning. For 'art' – much less writing about it – is hardly up to expressing catastrophe. Tellus Tools is not the sound of protest, however. But the LPs do remind me of the relationship between sound and real life.

Tellus was created in 1983 by Joseph Nechvatal, Carol Parkinson and Claudia Gould as a way to disseminate the soundworks of forward thinking artists near and far. The audio magazine started off as a bi-monthly cassette publication collecting poetry, music, drama, noise and performances, eventually evolving into compact discs in the mid-1990s. Around the time of issue 3, Tellus began adopting rough 'themes' for each issue. While some were fairly obvious (#10 "Guitars", #13 "Power Electronics"), others charted conceptual worlds as ambitious as the sounds themselves (#22 "False Phonemes", #25 "Site-Less Sounds").

At root, the Tellus mission embodies us to really think about sound and experience. Not only does Tellus Tools act as a retrospective for the magazine's output, it also affords listeners a chance to participate. The two pieces of vinyl are exactly the same and allow those with two turntables to 'mix' them. The brief battle breaks section is hideous artifice; run the tables on them sucker DJs with shattering glass, mouth keep and palindromes. Whereas the traditional hat of the turntable is that of rhythm snatcher and groove casket, Tellus's double LP firmly prefers that you do it yourself. Perhaps another possibility would be to tape the series on tape and allow buyers to cut and paste the parts of the experience, but don't expect it to sound pretty.

The vinyl 'grooves' start with Nicolas Collins's 'Deaf's Music', a simply clubblinding cold crush cacophony. The except here is raw and aggressive without viciously drawing blood, a punch of slabbed rhythm with the taped edges showing. Collins's accidental hardcore was peacock together live at New York's ABC No Rio club in 1986. Stealing radio broadcasts occurring during his set, it is suprisingly fluid and rhythmic despite its spontaneity 'try and panic the radio voice Iraq and you'll catch a bad one. Christian Marclay's 'Groove' is great. Recorded in 1982, it was one of his first encounters with a professional studio. The skip loop and a simple beauty emerges from the pre-Postie swarm of crude noise.

An except from WEA reminds us that Hip-Hop was once too small for its own britches. A six minute snippet from Isaac Jackson's 'Messages



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Bip-Bop "Hip-Hop Generation v.4" [bip-hop 04] September 2001
74 minutes in 6 1/2 page digipack. Another very fine instalment from a series which has quickly become the centre of a lot of attention in recent months. 10 exclusive songs + 12 bonus tracks! Another very fine instalment from a series which has quickly become the centre of a lot of attention in recent months. Right through to sealing Moogs that would make any station stand to attention! Enhanced CD features a short movie by Chris Seale.

si-cut db: enthusiast [sleep 67]

September 1991

Another very fine instalment from a series which has quickly become the centre of a lot of attention in recent months.

10 exclusive songs + 12 bonus tracks! Another very fine instalment from a series which has quickly become the centre of a lot of attention in recent months.

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Soundcheck

radio show in 1982 captures young rap still stretching into its own skin and ironing out knicks — simultaneously groanful and futuristic, noisy and tight, avant garde yet recycled. Rammellee and Jean Michel Basquiat show up with forgotten soldiers A-One, Toxic and Crack Attacker Koor Ram sounds like a prophecy right now, nummering his secret knowledge of "rhythym-rhythm." "Sound cannot represent the actual letters themselves," Ram's throwaway genius might as well be the blueprint for this whole Relius Tools project, if not the relationship between sound and fury that haunts today. What comes first, the word or the sound? Are words mere sounds themselves? Or do we make sound to approach language, or to explore new languages?

Kiki Smith's "Life Wants To Live" writes, fakes, falls down bookshelves, whoops and coughs, and a full-fledged heart attack lets you know that something is wrong. The liner notes indicate that this 1983 recording comes straight from the stage and addresses the brutality of domestic violence. Consisting of a fight between Smith and fellow artist David Wojnarowicz, "Life..." is one of those pieces that relies heavily on site and context. Alison Knowles' "Nivon Cream Pie" from 1962 operates similarly with its slumps and wet slaps. The experience of what actually happens ends up going hand in hand with the resulting sound itself, understanding of one feeds the other. You had to be there. In some cases, though, thank God you weren't.

DAVID S WARE QUARTET CORRIDORS & PARALLELS ADM-FIDELITY ALUM019 CD

DAVID S WARE LIVE IN THE NETHERLANDS SPLASH! CDH002 2 CD BY DAVID KEENAN

Tenorist David S Ware's first post-Columbia recording is as exhilarating as it is esoteric. Panor: Matthew Shipp's switch to Kong synthesizer opens up all sorts of interesting areas, lending the context a depth of field and an envelope-pushing ferocity which has them tearing bloodied lumps from jazz's bleated corpse while making all sorts of energizing and intense links. In *Corridors And Parallels* you can hear boomer echoes of various subcultural strains — the cosmic music of German keyboardist Klaus Schulze circa Black Dance, the taut euphony of psychadelic Canterbury, even some metallic Industrial klang —

but, inevitably, there's a trade-off. While nothing jars with the synth sounds themselves, range from burbling electronic gloop to sustained, chorale-like notes, Shipp feels less integrated than he usually is, and those moments when he uses to burst all over the melody with big tumbling runs are pretty much gone.

However, it's the leader Ware who goes AWOL on the album's untitled intro section. Bassist William Parker and drummer Guillermo E Brown lay down a solid groove while Shipp amids little staccato jets of electronics, until Ware comes online and the quartet hit "Straight Track." The first three minutes are taken up with a shiny Shipp solo on a reallyappy organ that brings to mind too many mid-70s concept albums to easily work. As soon as Ware enters — forceful and barking instructions — Shipp bows out, only to return for a bit of token jostling in the dying moments. "Jazz Fi-Sod" follows similarly short, with the tsu's high energy wrestling frustratingly brought to a regular dead stop by Shipp's babbling synth: "Superimposed" works better. A trap of drum machines, augmented by Brown, summons huge war clouds while Ware fiddles around them. The title track is gorgeous, with Shipp constructing a towering, evangelical synth part, while Parker's bowed bass creates some great circular movement to bolster Ware's some violent tessitura. As ever, they close with an Ayler-like send-off, "Mother May You Rest In Bliss." The odd synth lasso notwithstanding, Ware's first post-Columbia recording leaves the powerful impression that he's pushing on to the realization of a future jazz vision. Some of it is a little clumsy and faltering, but nobody else, apart from maybe drummer William Hooker, is attempting anything quite like it.

Ware's sole set, *Live in the Netherlands*, is something else altogether. It's a total evocation of the tear that starts with some obsessive Sonny Rollins-like single note runs before erupting into some of his bleakest, most personally affecting playing, all blundered at the speed of thought. This kind of beautifully blurred motion married to lightning electronics would be the real prize.

STEPHAN WITTWER STREAMS GRGCR 220 CD BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

This is the Swiss guitarist's first solo album for Grig, though other work has appeared on both

Imago and FMR. The credits say, "music made with guitar and devices, later on processed and modulated." The reducting and assemblage work done on the eight compositions gives the album an "afer the event" feel, but this does not detract from the equally strong sense of an agenda fulfilled. The manipulation of sound, combined with Wittwer's guitar technique, is absolutely devoid of cliché. With an attention to aural detail bordering the obsessive, he practices a constant development of mood that makes for intense listening.

The energy created through juxtapositions within the sonic depth of field is maintained by the element of surprise. Wittwer generates background collages of sustained snare, built out of myriad pulses and sputters. These exquisite constructions allow time to acclimatize to their alien configurations. He will then precisely position a delicate acoustic guitar finger hammer on a detuned string in the sonic foreground, the dislocation and levity of which makes you re-evaluate the whole elaborate framework. Sounds are explored and given time to reveal their other, hidden selves, contained within their undertones and complementary resonances. This taurian metamorphosis suddenly refines back to a purey strick ringing guitar note growing into a moment of sustained feedback. The effect is highly charged and leads to elements of singular purity created out of adulterated density. At one point, the clatter of fingers on strings grows to the intensity of a typing pool, highlighting Wittwer's ability to emphasize the mechanics of guitar playing, counterbalancing it with the dispensation of sound that the instrument can equally create: the identifiable and the abstract held in perfect tension. Only in the last piece, "Beams", is there a recognisable sense of sycophany. The rest is an underlying current tugging at the pieces of sonic fibrom immersed in the soundpool.

JAH WOBBLE & BILL LASWELL RADIOAXIOM: A DUB TRANSMISSION AKTIVPALM PICTURES 00702 CD BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

Laswell describes Radioaxiom as an "aether broadcast" attempting to capture the feeling of encountering "traces of a lost future". Fusing transcendentalism and concreteness on the endowment of earthly goods. The album's subtitle is "Bass: The Final Frontier" and Laswell's

ongoing mission is to disseminate the dub aesthetic well beyond the neutral zone. The aesthetic, trance-inducing, twin bass attack of Laswell and Jon Wobble reanimates the sensibilities at a molecular level throughout, providing the low-end warp to the combined and interlocking percussions wif Kash Kali, Hamid Drake (drums and tabla), Stu Dumber (drums) and Ayo Dering (percussion). Points of groove reference here would be Laswell's own Isle Beat Matrix and *Mysteries Of Creation*, or Wobble's *Heaven And Earth*.

We have grown so used to this eclectic mix of styles (dub, jazz fusion, African and Indian rhythms combined with an Ambient subtext) that it is easy to forget just how brilliant Laswell is at holding disparate combinations in suspension, fusing the material with the precise temperature required for complete cohesion, and integrating the right complementary sound at just the right moment. Anna Claudia Myers's gritty funk organ break on "Second Skin", for instance, is a perfect example of this seemingly instructional ability, meeting her work on Laswell's and James Blood Ulmer's Third Rail South Delta Space Age.

Moby Skelepus adds understated and echo laden guitar spasms (sounding like a refugee from the Melting rather than the Mississippi Delta on "Once") and the brother-sister combination of Eggheads and Tiger Shabell provides East African vocalises on two tracks ("Alisera Dub" and "Nasir Dub") that is reminiscent of Laswell's recent work with Pharoah Sanders. This is not to suggest that Radioaxiom lacks originality, merely that it demonstrates a formidable level of qualitative continuity with the other work mentioned.

The point of departure from the Laswell blueprint comes in the shape of Nils Petter Molvaer on trumpet and Graham Hayes on comet. The dozen of the remix school, Molvaer is allowed to few unclenched throughout, his breathy, ethereal tone imprinting itself like a watermark on fine paper. The combination of tones between the trumpet and comet are inspirational. Only on "Virus B", Laswell's homage to electric pened Miles Davis, does Molvaer's tone adopt an obvious pastiche blend of Davis and, peculiarly, Jon Hassell. Take this as the sincerest form of flattery.

What Wobble and Laswell also achieve here is the feeling of a group that plays together in real time, making instant contributions through the application of flesh and blood rather than post-produced and dislocated digital impulses. □

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Avant Rock

Reviewed by David Keenan

BABY DEE

LITTLE WINDOW

OUTRO 005 CD

Growing up in Cleveland, Ohio, singer-composer Baby Dee made her way to Manhattan when she held down a job as a waitress in a bar costume in Central Park. After becoming obsessed by the devotional music of Palestrina and Gregorian chant she landed a job as an organist at a Catholic church in The Bronx. "Having exposed myself to so much of the music of truth I finally reaped the consequences and was forced to face the truth about myself," she explained. "That I was/am one of those strange and exotic creatures that the people of our time call transsexuals. It's a thing that I don't pretend to understand." Little Window is Baby Dee's first release. Among its Outro artists Anthony And The Johnsons, has described Dee as his muse. While they both share a similar emotional intensity and sense of drama, Dee's music – mostly just vocal and piano – feels much frailer, more open to hurt. "What About My Father?", a song of Dee's ailing dad, is a harrowingly sweet highlight, especially when she slips shakily into a verse from "You Are My Sunshine".

BRAIN DONOR

LOVE PEACE & FUNK

IMPROVADIO IMP000001 CD

Brain Donor is Julian Cope's latest concept: a power trip that merges the sociopathic teenage disdain of Kas and Monroe with the black hole brutality of *Musica Transonic* and Blue Cheer. Cope is on bass and vox, while one Kevin plays "concession" and Dogman makes with the lead guitar. The tunes are full of steamed Metal innuendo – "She Saw Me Coming", "Get Off Your Pretty Face" – and Cope's intuitive grasp of the many schools of Metal vox is pretty awe-inspiring. From Gene Simmons-style writhing through the balletic falsettos of *LA glam*, Cope nabs the gamut of growl. There's even a conceptual "wute" halfway through, "Dakin's Gift To His Mother", which starts off with "Theme From *Speed Kills*", an eye-wideningly beautiful stop/start riff that speaks of the glorious teenage utopia we missed out on. Still, Cope's inherent pop sensibility means that some of the tunes just too arbitrary melody to qualify as Metal feed. Somewhere within "Get Off Your Pretty Face" lurks the sugary psychedelia of *World Shit Your Mouth* – and that's no bad thing.

NEIL CAMPBELL

THE HEARING FORCE OF THE HUMANVERSE

FENCING FLATWORM RECORDINGS FPR03 CD-R

Fencing Flatworm have been doing a great job of documenting the shadowy underbelly of the UK's improv scene, not least the activities of multi-instrumentalist Neil Campbell, who also leads the Vibraphonial Orchestra. The Hearing Force Of The Humanverse, despite being a tenuously pun on Albert Ayler's *Music Is The Healing Force Of The Universe*, is a great overview of many of Campbell's working strategies. The opening "Calder Riang Blending Neverending" is the sound of celestial bells, fiddering in and out of

phase as distant nursery rhyme melodies trill in the background. "Morse Flowers" sounds uncertainly like its title, two hombly oscillating electronic currents bleep and squeak at each other like deranged flowerpot men. Best of all is "Palace Bathroom Floor", where Campbell seamlessly integrates field recordings of dripping water and background noise with xylophones and bells creating an eerily static landscape that really draws you in.

HIGH RISE

PSYCHOBOMB

PSF/PB014-CD

Psychobomb calls the cream of the live shows from High Rise's US tour last year, interspersing tracks from the I-Spy in Seattle and Tonic in New York. As is follow-up to High Rise's previous *Live* on PSF, it's a dud. Whereas the first live set was speaker shredding in its intensity with guitarist Munehiro Nanta bleeding all over the rest of the group, here the fidelity just makes them sound completely flat. Without the clear crystal bite of Nanta's solos, High Rise are reduced to puny riffing. "Glossay" sounds like a dodgy Electro Prunes bootleg, with bassist Asafte Nango's straight lift from The Prunes' "You Never Had It Better" throbbing like a sun thumb. Only the closing "Psychobotic Speed Freaks" comes close to living up to its hyperbolic title. This feels like a stoppage release and a substandard one at that.

JUTOK KANEKO

SOLO

PSF/PB014-CD

Jutoku Kaneko is the shades and hair behind one of Japan's greatest heavy psych groups, Kausokuya. Though they have been active since the '70s, they're criminally underdocumented. Their first, vinyl only, album has long been out of print and their only other PSF release was a bit out of character as they had to shuffle to accommodate guest saxophonist Masayoshi Uzabe. *Ray Night Live*, on Focused Exposure, is the only recorded evidence of just how overpowering they could be with heavy slabs of astrotropically out of time chords going in against the most rabidly unloosing rhythm section this side of Black Sabbath. While this solo release doesn't quite scale those heights, it's still a great document of a highly idiosyncratic musician. Although Kaneko's guitar is as crunching and staggered as it gets with Kausokuya, here he's working with slightly more structured material. At points he almost comes across as a narcoleptic Neil Young, nodding avast just in time for some senselessly damaged single note soloing. For a few tracks he's joined by White Heaven's Koji Shimura on drums and bassist Takeshi Nishimura, but he sounds solo, barking out vox and turning the air purple with distortion.

LITTLE ANNIE

DIAMONDS MADE OF GLASS

STREAMLINE 1001 CD-19

Little Annie aka Annie Anxiety has been a consistently provocative figure on the fringes of the underground for several decades now. She has worked with everyone from Adrian Sherwood

and On-U Sound to Current 93 and Co4. On this new three track EP she hooks up with Joe Buddenhauer of Backworld for a set of sensuous torch songs. The title track is a sultry hymn to immobilizing desire led by soft brushes, minimal piano and tactile weight bass. Annie's voice sends out as many contradictory signals as Billie Holiday's, all big-eyed baby doll and eager blades, punctuated with some kittenish Eartha Kitt-edged tongue action. Featuring Buddenhauer on guitar, "Lullaby" is much closer to the feel of Backworld's records, a slice of kaleidoscopic acoustic peach that sounds almost like David Roback's Mazzy Star, And Christoph Heemann provides a suitably haunted, slow motion mix of the title track.

MAN

ARTHUR

LES DISQUES DU SOLIER ET DE L'ACIER
GDS049/CD

Not the 70s Welsh Quicksilver wannabes, this Man is an instrumental French duo featuring François Boryki and Charles-Eric Charlier, previously of the free rock group Orkia Louelle. Recorded in late 1998, Arthur started out as a series of organically extended sketches that left plenty of space for potential overflows. Yet in their still skeletal state the instruments seemed so eloquent and alive that the two decided to release the mugs as they were. The results straddle a fair few genres without settling down in any one of them for too long. Their vest pieces utilise piano, guitar, bass, accordeon, melodica and electronics. The slow-spooling, filmic feel of their instant compositions are underscored by the inventive choreography of Enzo Moncione or Nino Rota.

MARIANNE NOWOTTY

MAMMADE GIRL

ABATION BOOK COMPANY ABATION000002 CD

Mammade Girl is New Jersey queen Marianne Nowotny's second solo outing and it packs an even greater emotional punch than her debut, *Ahead Of Me*. When the latter drew much of its emotional weight from its seriously deranged combination of hysterical time signatures, cheap crackling keyboards and hormonal adrenalin, on *MammaDe Girl* Nowotny slows down and spreads out. While her voice is as sweetly demoralised as ever, her new compositions make more subtle use of atmospherics and textures, with the result that she comes across like a possessed fire and brimstone evangelist, preaching over ominous sci-fi electronics. The second CD consists mostly of instrumentals, ranging from *Pere Ubu* scale disruption through little pristinely sketches, only interrupted by the Savage cut and paste disco of the title track. It ends with "Our Day Will Come", a simple harmonium driven hymn to whatever lies just over the horizon.

NOXAGT

NOXAGT

SYNTHETIC RECORDINGS SYRE004 CD

A wholly instrumental venture, Noxagt is a singles collection by Norwegian noise maverick Ketil O Brandsdal, serving up a rich dash comprising

heavyhanded rawk, surrealized noise, trash Metal and heavy blues, with nifty electronics filling the gaps. The 50 tracks here are compressed sketches and ideas rather than fully developed songs, all being held together by an (un)healthy (depending on your point of view) fascination with anything bat-related. Titles such as "Romogut" ("Rumpagata"), "Old Machine" ("Shit Machine"), "Ad Rumpam", "Harry Vortex" and "Razord Ass Movement" keep you wondering whether this is a scatalogical manifesto squatting on your CD player or just an explicit loveletter to The Butthole Surfers. Although there's some blatant cribbing going down here ("Hot Escort" is Minuteman without the vocals, "Tas Two" a bass-heavy *Primes* pastiche), and a version of Europe's "The Final Countdown" (80s newwolds ripoff, if you do), Noxagt is a refreshing ode to vicious stupidity with a deeply noted off-spirit. Try the at home kids. (Anne Hilde Nestet)

PIP PROUD

A YELLOW FLOWER

EMPEROR JONES E007 CD

Pip Proud's a couple of endlessly unclassifiable, vaguely folk sounding records for Fugitive in Australia in the 60s, before some broken promises from John Peel and Apple records found him washed up homeless and hungry in London. As a direct result he quit making music – at least until he was "rediscovered" in the late 90s by Antipodean musicians like Akbar Gibhardt and David Nichols. Proud's vocals are certainly an acquired taste, sounding hopelessly withered and despoiled and supported only by the skeletal creak of a severely abused guitar. His lyrics only heighten the suffocating sense of despair, with songs about abandonment, homelessness, divorce and sexual aggression. Although the guest musicians, including Gibhardt, Nichols and Tom Carter of Chavalambo, do attempt to let some light in, the whole set is so uninterestingly bleak as to completely suffocating. The spark of hope that flickered all through his previous recordings appears to have been snuffed out.

PSYCHATRONE RHONDAKK

KEEP ON PSYCHEDELIC MIND

BLACK PLASTIC SOUND BPS005 CD

Psychatrone Rhonddakk is a lone American psych experimenter, very much in the tradition of private press luminaries like Simones and ST Mike. *Keep On Psychedelic Mind* is Psychatrone's sixth release to date and it's a tribe of sorts to his favourite psych groups, from Hawkwind and The Gods to Acid Mothers Temple and Ghoze. The Acid Mothers tribute, "Theme From *Mad Mother Love*" is particularly deranged, with tumbling electronics and high frequency flashes slowly giving way to snatches of what sounds like Goddess terrorising Nagoya. The CO moves from heavy machine and guitar interaction to scope tape manipulations, out with drifpy humour. He also throws in choice covers like The Gods' "Radar Eyes" and The 13th Floor Elevators' "May The Circle Remain Unbroken". □

Critical Beats

Reviewed by Philip Sherburne

DJ ABSTRACT / GOLDSPOT PRODUCTIONS

EAST COAST VS
WEST COAST EP

VEHICLE V001 12"

DJ ABSTRACT ALL MY TEARS

VERDE VR0001 12"

UK two-step label Vehicle looks Stateside for its debut release, bringing in New York's Goldspot to letter up a jittery boom-bap break with trash Batacoda-inspired percussion, while flanged keys nod west to Detroit Techno, then East to London Tech House. Basically a perpetually shifting arrangement of four or five components, the track could use some development, but as for sheer sonics, it's easily as advanced as its "hyperfect" contemporaries in South London. San Francisco's DJ Abstract takes a leaner approach, pushing a single syncopated break through a molten pool of wordless vocal flourishes, shadowy mutterings and swirling, downtuned synths. It's almost unvarying, yet its focus makes it more successful than Goldspot's cut and paste variations.

For the first release on San Francisco drum 'n' bass label, Green's two-step imprint Vélo, Abstract sticks with his chessmunt approach, dapping denuded chords and ink bass with the yearning vocal refrain of the title. In San Francisco, even the Junglists can't escape the House dive. The two mixes on the B-side roughen it up with mega vocal samples and a tightly wound breakbeat attack, a relatively unshowing headbanger that follows in DJ Zinc's footsteps along the pernicious tightrope between funk and its polar opposite.

DARQWAN AS WE ENTA SQUALLA 009 12"

Back from the dead, old-school hardcore increasingly colors New Jersey's Geist has updated his classic BDRM techno with the disco influence that preceded it. For the latest release on his own Environ imprint, the disco vibe is still there, especially on the A-side, where viscous, synthetic songs wash over stabbing analog keys and a smutty baseline, but it's updated by a serious BDRM fix. Just check the sync-drums and handclaps, the latter most likely sampled from Lowlife's new *Order*. Now, there's no doubt about the samples' provenance, "a reference to that ridiculous BDRM chorused vox sound," in Geist's own words. But he fits them so effortlessly into his own springy funk, sparkling with cowbells and high end bleep, that the reference transcends kitsch — no mean feat.

KIRK DEGIORGIO PRESENTS AS ONE

PROBLEMS

UNIVERSITY UR0006 12"

Degiorgio fuses electro squelch with 70s soul on the vocal title track, but despite the free spirit feel of the lyrics, in its pursuit of a tight angled funk it loses much of the fluid dynamism that's defined his best work. Stacey Pullen's reverb of "Another Revolution," released in its original version on 10" at last summer, retains the

laserlike, scorching colouring of its source, but sculpts Degiorgio's lumbering rhythms into something more fluidly frenetic. Pullen's growing keyboard additions make clear how much these two producers share in common, "If I Ain't Broke," exclusive to the 12", loops incessantly syncopated drums with hammered guitar harmonics and buoyant keyboards before sliding effortlessly into a House groove that grows and goes, thanks to Degiorgio's trademark Dp-Art posturism.

MISSY ELLIOTT GET UR FREAK ON REMIXES COMBAT BOOTS NO NUMBER 12"

Id been pinning for a two-step remix of Missy Elliott's "Get Ur Freak On" so I was thrilled to find this American bootleg in the racks at a New York breakbeat emporium. If two-step's parasitic relationship with pop music has any benefits, it's that pop culture can be a conversation, legally sanctioned or not. Funny thing, though: since the original is basically at down 'n' bass tempo, a two-step remix requires slowing it down by about a third, leaving Miss E sounding more like Lady Lade. The drum 'n' bass mix is the flip is an almost blindingly obvious TechStep update, DJ Clay and DJ Hooker's nominally Garage "Boss Man" is even more plodding, and the R&B James "Superfreak" insertion is good for a laugh exactly once. Still, sounds like this, and the countless other "Get Ur Freak On" boots that have come out in the last few months, signal the restlessness that keeps pop culture interesting.

MORGAN GEIST SUPER ENVH012 12"

In recent years New Jersey's Geist has updated his classic BDRM techno with the disco influence that preceded it. For the latest release on his own Environ imprint, the disco vibe is still there, especially on the A-side, where viscous, synthetic songs wash over stabbing analog keys and a smutty baseline, but it's updated by a serious BDRM fix. Just check the sync-drums and handclaps, the latter most likely sampled from Lowlife's new *Order*. Now, there's no doubt about the samples' provenance, "a reference to that ridiculous BDRM chorused vox sound," in Geist's own words. But he fits them so effortlessly into his own springy funk, sparkling with cowbells and high end bleep, that the reference transcends kitsch — no mean feat.

HORSEPOWER PRODUCTIONS

ELECTRO BASS

TURN U ON THUG001 12"

HORSEPOWER PRODUCTIONS

FIST OF FURY

TEMPO 001 12"

In a reaction to the ubiquity of UK Garage a handful of two-step, breaks and Jungle perversions have turned to darker, dubbier perversions of the form. But if the trajectory echoes the one writer Simon Reynolds chronicled in his version of Jungle's descent into the red-

eyed, paranoid minimalism of TechStep, this new mutation sees some of those same players greatly expanding their sonic horizons. Witness Turn U On, the two-step imprint of No U Turn's Nico Sykes. South London trio Horsepower's two mixes here cross a jittery hi-hat rhythm with sweeping washes and dubby keyboard stabs gurgling deep in the mix. If Force Tracks' MRI did two-step, it might sound like this. But the Horsepower trademark is the bass, off-beat and perfectly swing, an amazy knocking from below. For Neil Johnson's Tempa label, they lighten their touch considerably with ringing triangle and flute samples atop step in your tracks' syncopation, but when the bass erupts, the ice-encrusted high end dissolves in a puff of steam.

KYOTO JAZZ MASSIVE COMP007 098 12"

De "Satsuma", the duo of Yoshitomo Ochiai and Shuya Dierro turn in a jazzy, scat-vocaled Disco-House number that pretty well defines the direction. Consopus has been moving on late, veering dangerously close to a '70s American TV theme vibe (think *Love Boat*). It's shiny, happy, jazzy and, well, just a little too much — the kind of forced-soul soul that gets me off a dancefloor faster than a Trance DJ with a lemming's permit. Fortunately, Alphonse's remix of 1999's "Eldora" is much better, wrapping layer after layer of Latin percussion around a simple two-chord keyboard figure, a delicate balance between economy and excess.

MAX FRESH VS ICEBREAKER MELTS/OUR CREAM

ZEST 250100 12"

Max Fresh, aka Hidden Agenda's Mark Goodings, teams up with Icebreaker (an augmented version of the Swiss group Seguid). But when previous Max Fresh counterpointed featured breakbeats with a ringing trapeze ingester, and Seguid have perfected their own brand of Deep (but brittle) House — both artists leaving you with shards in your hands and stabs in your eyes — "Melt" treads more pedestrian territory, relying on the snap bass funk and Fender Rhodes colouring that's become a Jazzone trademark. It's not necessarily clever, but it drives forward with a lively energy, but it does feel as if the amazs are taking a bit of a breather. "Sour Cream" is better, looking to the Motor City and Moodyman and Theo Parrish for the inspiration behind its layered deco.

SON OF SCIENTIST THEORY OF EVERYTHING MAN SOURCE MS0010 12"

IG Culture evidently reserves the Son Of Scientist alias for his very weakest takes on avant funk and future soul. "Theory Of Everything" takes a vaguely Middle Eastern sample and loops it over a rattling, reedily de- and re-composed breakbeat that pretty much defines the limits of the broken beat scene. Over this, sour strings, pizzics, fat BDRM snares and still more analogic leads mesh together in an intricate counterpoint, building and breaking down until

the song finishes out in a cacophonous climax of modal jazz; "Ice Steel" walks a choppy BreakStep rhythm and messes it in Detroit inspired chords before rubbing it down with Hoover bass and delicate tole effects. Yes, broken beat, the latest in an outpouring of virtual genres, is quickly bleeding with imitators, and if the originators aren't careful, the whole thing could easily go the way of Acid Jazz.

ULTRA LIVING FEATURING MIKE LADD

PREPPIY MC DEATH OF HIP
HOP VOL 1
03016 G2000827 CD

After Transgressions, last year's startling (and criminally underacknowledged) collection of slinky, tape loops, noise, post-rock and eroded Hip Hop, Japan's answer to Gaspar Del Sol recruit The Infektions' Mike Ladd in a soundclash designed to send all preppies, yuppies and the "black Brown University Melts" diving for the autographs on their Autos. Started percussion spets the track's stammering intro before a barrage of blarebass raps the world open and Ladd announces "All Hoppy Hall monitors have been disposed," making the mundane seem as schoolboy apocalyptic as *Escape From New York*. Ultra Living's unorthodox approach to sound and space is stamped all over this, from the epic bass section shoulder to shoulder to the way they open up pockets of empty space in their wall of sound, I'm not sure which is more dangerous, the coiling mass or the vacuum within. "The Rhyme Immortals" is an even wonder slice of electro clatter, shot through with snippets of noise, barely controlled breakbeats and Ladd's vocals, which are dubbed to incomprehensibility. But a hell bent sub-bass propels it unflaggingly.

VARIOUS

OMOA MUSIC SAMPLER ONE
OMOA MUSIC NO NUMBER 12"

On his singles for Planet E and remixes for the likes of Brooks, Dan Curran and Herbert, Detroit's Redhouse, and Matt Chisana, has proven himself a master of shuddering, faintly melancholy avant House, almost like an American return to Herbert himself. The first release on his own Omoa Music label opens with Dapp (Chocline plus Scott Zuchana) who build a cocooned Herbert-style rhythm out of handclaps, whispers and unidentified thuds on a dub of "Fist Off." They smooth out the clutter with rounded belltones and open ended chords and a jagged analogue keyboard solo burns through to the surface. Marc Alphonse's "Contentment In Humidity" is a transparent collage of sampled flutes, alto wall and tenor bleep pestered over a bassed out bassline. It transcends the category of down-tempo so completely that it should dispatch legions of nodders to the pawsheets to turn in their MPCs. On the flip, Ayo gyrates a conglomeration of offbeat drums and buzzing chords, forming the frames with an impassioned vocal delivery that verges on gospel. It tracks like this, along with liberal work for Planet E, that suggest a fascinating affinity between the American Midwest and West London's Co-op crew. □

Electronica

Reviewed by Chris Sharp

ALVA NOTO

TRANSFORM

MILLE PLATEAUX MPH02 CD

Alva Noto is German electronic composer Carsten Neubig, and this is his second album for Mille Plateaux. He's also contributed to both installments of their *Clicks + Cuts* series, which will come as no surprise to anyone who happens across *Transform*. As its soberly minimal sleeve design and understatement hinting – which simply reads "Module 1 - Module 10" – warn, this is a regulation issue stuff: austere, pristine, post-gothic murmurings, taking his rhythmic cues from HipHop and R&B, Nicisco stoutly replaces their percussive elements with fleeting shards of digital fetsam. There are these stately revolutions, shifting dunes of flickering hints to tonal colour. The surprise is that, from time to time, on "Module 4", these redemptive charms will do just fine.

BROTHERMSTATES

CLARO

WARP WARPS CD

It's not really the done thing to comment on the contents of press releases rather than the records themselves, but the time-marching phenomenon widely prevalent in Techno circles reaches new heights of absurdity here. At the age of 23, Lassi Niemi is the latest addition to the Warp roster, and we are told that his early experiments with PC sound software took place in 1988. At which time he would have been ten years old. Apparently, he "spent the 90s researching audio-visual programming techniques". Unless the Finnish state curriculum is particularly flexible, this must have come as something of a surprise to his teachers, who no doubt thought he was practising his times tables. Biographical sophsomophs aside, *Claro* is an assured piece of work, which weaves complex, if fraught structures by tressing wayward, slithering sounds against a central, controlling pulse. Mostly using familiar Techno soundscapes, *Brothermstates* succeeds in producing a new generation successor to Artificial Intelligence era benchmarks like B12's *Electromime*.

DONNACHA COSTELLO

TOGETHER IS THE NEW ALONE

MILLE PLATEAUX MPH04 CD

If a site like *Together* is The New Alone isn't enough, the individual track names serve to underscore the suspicion that either (a) the minimalist aesthetic has found its way into the realm of electronica, or (b) the Dublin-based Donnacha Costello doesn't get out much. Expectations are confounded, though, by the revelation that "That Empty Feeling", "Nothing, Still Nothing", and "Lord help us, 'Ory Reach'" aren't, in fact, downbeats exercises in self-pity but instead flawlessly poised and sweetly contemplative skeins of slowly unfolding ambience. Subtle melodic and textural touches abound: sounds are ushered through the mix wreathed in soft distortion, and, for all its inimicable digital clarity, *Together* is The New Alone is an intimate and involving gem.

ELECTRIC BIRDS

PANORAMA

DELUXE RECORDS DLX010 CD

In which label boss Mike Martinez of the Seattle-based Deluxx Records touts artist for his second album as *Electric Birds*. As his chosen moniker suggests, Martinez is on a mission to fuse the technological and the organic, and he succeeds in imbuing his digital source material with an ancillary warmth. In this, *Panorama* is a distant descendant of a work like Owl Tudor's *Rainforest*. But, far from forbidding, these eight tracks reference House/Ambient types like The Incredible Force and the hypnotic warmth of MBV as much as Oval or Pharrell. Those with lightly sensitive New Age alarm systems might take flight, but for the rest of us, *Panorama's* redemptive charm will do just fine.

FAD GADGET

THE BEST OF FAD GADGET

MUTE MUTE073XCD

According to legend, Fad Gadget, aka Frank Tovey, began his musical career in a broom cupboard in a high rise council flat in Fife. He would disappear into this small space, where he would assemble his repertoire, using a budget synthesizer and a drum machine stacked on an ironing board. Fad's scalpel-sharp electric pop forwarded a real alternative to such late 70s/early 80s pop synching electro-pop mannequins as The Human League and Gary Numan. For one, his approach was more experimental and confrontational. Songs like "Back To Nature" and "Rocky's Hand" feel somewhere between Raw Power Iggy, "Model" era Kraftwerk and Neu!, producing a new beat that effectively and ingeniously reactivated the fading coquetry of punk by pushing it out on to the dance floor. This double disc celebration of Fad's finest moments includes a batch of 12" remixes, observational sleeve notes by former NME writer Paul Morley and booklet photos, by Anton Corbijn, of the man's many startling theatrical transformations. (Edwin Pouncey)

JENDREIKO

PLANETEN SUITE

FLESH FLESH01 CD

The frenzied bizarre work of one man, his guitar and his Party and Perky Coalition, *Planeten Suite* is as far removed from the sombre majesty of Gustav Holst as you could get. Over a dubious assembly of sub-George Benson pieces for solo jazz guitar, Jendreiko (by day a member of the German Heldenpopmuseum art collective) stokes a succession of freaky, scat-infected vocals, employing throughout some of the more arcane settings on his vocoder. Should you care, the theme of these warblings appears to be the cosmic loneliness of the astronaut, although the exact detail is admittedly lost on the non-German speaker. To these ears the resulting confection is terrible, but at least it's terrible in a comparatively original way. If you have a sufficiently jaded musical palette, it might just be strange enough to float your boat.

JETONE

ULTRAMARIN

FORCE INC FIM005 CD/EP

Montreal-based Tim Hecker is, we are told, a graduate student in critical theory. Fear not, though, on his debut album, which follows 12" releases on the likes of Pitchfork and Fat Cat, Jetone eschews Terra Thewitz-style theoretical manoeuvres in favour of good old-fashioned, shaped-down Techno. Hecker offers up 12 tracks of militant spaciousness – inchoate textures meowing around the central pulse of a well-mannered 4/4 kudukum – which will no doubt appeal to acolytes of the minimalist cred. Others may find it a tall tale, although the formal sleekness and unwavering intent of a track like "Pheedo" is captivating enough to place Jetone at the head of his chosen field.

MARDIANT

INFAM

MARDIANT NO NUMBER CD

Surfacing from the deepest recesses of the digital underground and decked out in a utilitarian dove grey, this self-released album comes on the heels of a modest string of 12" releases bearing the same name. Seductive as it is, Infam's imaging anonymity is only part of the appeal – within lies an assembly of gently mournful Techno that hovers gracefully at one remove from the exigencies of the dancefloor. Mardian's elegiac, melodic cadences unfurl in unhurried procession, expanding through tracks that generally top the seven minute mark; and the composer takes full advantage of his spacious canvases throughout, introducing shimmering feedback and lipping chimes that shimmer obligingly alongside the muted roar of his rhythmic programming.

ROBERT NORMANDEAU

SONARS

REPHLEX CAT118 CD

A connection between the electroacoustic academy and legions of more, um, amateur practitioners of electronic composition is infrequently made, but this bold move by Rephlex brings it out into the open. Licensed from the hallowed Canadian label Empreinte DIGITALS, which exists to document developments in electroacoustic and acoustic music, this collection by celebrated Quebecois composer Robert Normandeau is an object lesson in the infinite possibilities of sonic manipulation. Often using the simplest source material – inach here is fashioned purely from the human voice – Normandeau conjures windows, soundscapes of shrill complexity. He's spading away at sharply delineated sonic events and immediate attention to spatial placement combine to produce music that effervesces outwards mad grey-scale offerings from the laptop massive.

OVUCA

WASTED SUNDAY

REPHLEX CAT119 CD

As you may know by now, Divas is the prolific Firm by way of Detroit, Aleksei Perelis, and this 22

track collection is a relatively restrained entry in a discography that has expanded to admit two previous albums (one single CD, one double) and an EP in the space of a couple of years. Divas's music is deceptive. Almost featureless on first encounter, close inspection reveals a refreshingly quixotic approach to tracky subdy populated by impish sonic curiosities. Stay vocal fragments wander in and out of jumpy, chrome plated breakdowns. There are also snatches of mutant gamelan melody, and fleeting moments of resonant dubwise snarly. Brief though they are, nothing about these vignettes is ever static.

SENKING

SILENCER

KARAOKE KALK KALK01 CD

Although the German electronica scene only rarely displays a tendency towards the baldly descriptive, the title of this release from one of its most industrious denizens hits the nail squarely on the head. A mini album – its six tracks clock in at just over 30 minutes – "Silencer" is one of a slew of recent releases from the shadowy, multi-nicknamed Cologne producer Jens Messel. And its low end ruminations rarely fall short of pell-mell for their considerable impact. This is headspace music at its best: cyclical and sparse, it's suffused with the spated yet insistent sub-bass radiation which prides Messel's pointillist manoeuvres. There are hints of 20 Jazz Funk Greats era TG melancholy, but mostly this is hemmed sealed from the outside world.

SOLVENT

SOLVENT CITY

MORPH MUSIC MORRUM0018 CD

For the listener, the boundaries between Techno and tech-pop have always been invisible, but it's clear that a new generation of composer is gleefully blurring the lines. Thomas Mor's Belis label, working with the likes of ISAM and Hermann & Klein, has been instrumental in foregrounding melodic sweetness in electronica. Solvent City goes one step towards early Depeche Mode, Yazoo and Depeche Human League. The project of Zimbabwe-born, Toronto-based Jason Aron, Solvent trims any fussy keyboard lines around dapper, not quite naive beats – no vocals, though – and the results are nothing short of charming.

STILLUPPSTEYPA

STORIES PART FIVE

ROTHERNELL RIT34 CD

Icelandic renegades Stilluppsteypa continue their twisty, fractured, multidimensional assault on the conventions of electronica with this limited edition offering. The high intensity crackle of white noise is the key to its impact. It is by turns spasmodic – flickering across barely coherent pieces like the opening "Two Things To Fly Away For Ever" – and surgically administered – precision injected around the sombre rhythmic certainty of "When I Was Eight Years Old". Stilluppsteypa's music gives off the unmistakable whiff of the art laboratory previously occupied by The Hafer Iro and Nurse With Wound. □

Global

Reviewed by Richard Henderson

PEDRO AYALA

EL MONARCHA DEL
ACORDEON

ARHICODE 6022 CD

With the lion's share of its contents drawn from two instrumental albums recorded in 1968 and 1973 for the El Pato and Falcon labels, respectively, this compilation makes a convincing case for the stellar stature of Pedro Ayala as 'the Monarch of Accordion'. Of course, to focus solely on his squeakbox virtuosity would be to deny the merits of the uncredited drummers with whom he played, their slippery fits exuding the same wonderful tribal-logic as reggae drumming. The full panoply of regional dances is on display here, from European imports such as polkas, mazurkas and valses to the huapangos and redones local to the Mexican-American diaspora. Though Ayala was selfless in assisting other conjunto musicians to greater fame, he was best known in the border region for holding fast to his original style.

BONGA

SWINGA SWINGA
PRANA PRH4 CD

'The Voice of Angola 102 per cent Live' boasts the subhead – and you can believe it, going by the crowd-waving guitars, Bonga, an African singer-songwriter with strong Portuguese influences. Considerably more lighthearted and up-tempo than his earlier astrophys set such as *Angola 72*, the CD could be Bonga's much-needed handshake with the world at large. He covers enough stylistic ground to make World Music fans happy, from *Mornângue*, Cape Verdean morna, semba and the calligraphic tincture of reggae all colour his live set. He would not be the first African troubadour to rail against a colonial oppressor while delighting in the cultural residue left by the colonizers of his homeland. Still, for all his amiable aspect, Bonga's is the voice of a gentle insurrectionist, a spiritual successor to the recently departed Francis Bebey.

CHINA CLASSICAL MUSIC

CDROM Classical CD

Half of this selection of performances on guqin (three-stringed), pipa (lute) and erhu (two-stringed fiddle), among various other instrumental states of China's millennia-old camping traditions, was recorded circa 1950. Surprisingly for China, whose archival credentials are usually impeccable, it appears the CD was mastered from surviving but very worn vinyl LPs, to judge from the surface noise which mars many of these gossamer notables. Still, such campions must be measured against the myriad joys of hearing music whose microtonal finesse extends to regulating the pulse of blood through the fingertips of the player. "Yimeng Shan (On Mount Yimeng)" translates both a feral landscape and the carnage of war into a solo for the two-stringed violin known as a *guqin*; the 1910 tape, with its chiring glassards, loses nothing for string out most of the last century.

GRANDE COMORES

SAMBE COMORES
B2014 4506 CD

Sambe is the German label whose A&R focus is trained on Africa's south eastern coast and, in this case, its adjacent islands. In its best package to date, it curates five groups who represent "Modern Traditions From Grande Comores". If they share the Arab-Indian hybrid influence of Zanzibar's tarab music, all of these groups also have a pleasing informality about their performances, as though they were playing at a backyard cookout – an endearing quality in an era of prefabricated World Beat stars backed with Persian session players. The interplay between Hlyan Nour's violin and electric guitar brings to mind a Tanzanian version of *The Five Royales*. Of the few pap tarab compilations to appear since John Storm Ralls's pioneering survey of this region in the 1980s, *Songs The Swahili Sang*, only Sambe Comores measures up to that pathbreaking anthology on grounds both of musical depth and unvarnished charm.

HSAING WAING ORCHESTRA MYANMAR: THE BURMESE HARP

AUNTYHAR 02081 2CD

The cultural riches of the country formerly known as Burma have been denied to the rest of the world by draconian policies. Yet ace ethnomusicologist Jacques Brunet has breached its protected borders to make a series of recordings of impossibly refined solo harp playing and larger ensemble performances, both of which are noteworthy for their intimacy and varied repertoire. Given that the documentation on Burmese music has hitherto been catalogued in the West only via Rick Heuvel's recordings on the Shanachie label, Brunet was obliged to cover a lot of ground in order to provide anything like an adequate overview. The gentle-toned sonorities of The Hsaing Waing Orchestra invite comparisons to Charles Ives at his most playful and chaotic, while the disc showcasing the music of the 13-stringed *saung gauk* is charged with alluring mystery.

ALI HASSAN KUBAN REAL NUBIAN

PRANA 60175 CD

Until his recent death Ali Hassan Kuban was the king of Cairo's Nubian playing bands, a James Brown figure with a reputation for playing extravagantly and endless sets. A relentless modernizer, he doctorred traditional Nubian pentatonic modes with infusions of Western jazz and, like all pop iconoclasts with their salt, he was often denounced for polluting the purity of his people's music. That the like-oud sounds as funky as a Hotter clavinet on an average Cuban recording is but a frank testament to his inestimable sound. As with every disc in his estimable oeuvre, Real Nubian is tough, danceable, ultra-romantic and – above all else – a whole heap of fun.

MASTER FIDDLERS OF DAGBON

MASTER FIDDLERS
OF DAGBON

ROUNDER 621015962 CD

An up-beat for the nascent World beat movement was John Miller Chernoff's *African Rhythms, African Sensibility*, touted by David Byrne and Brian Eno in their press kit for *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts*. Though Chernoff's time in the media spotlight was brief, fortunately his enthusiastic endorse for the Gaogbome musicians of Ghana, with whom he lived and studied, like his earlier *Rounders* discs devoted to the subtleties of Gaogbome's talking drums, this survey of one-stringed fiddles (or *gnawni*) locates the latest dead centre of the action. Whether under the extrovert gaze of praise songs or sun amorphosis, trance music in its most literal sense begins here.

OSMAN, GUBARA & CO

IN THE KINGDOM OF THE LYRE
INGRUM DU MONDE ARABE 32106007 2CD

Though in danger of being superseded by the Arabic one, the indigenous lyre of Sudan has been the principal means of musical expression for Sudanese women and cattlemen alike, dating back to biblical times. A sumptuously packaged and annotated two disc set, Kingdom chronicles four different approaches to this ancient, seemingly rudimentary instrument. Although the timbres of individual instruments vary, the preference for rapid strumming dominates, as the singers articulate Islamic melodies with razor sharp ornamentation. Only Muhammad Al-Basit, a Baga singer from near Port Sudan, allows the tempo to anything less than a drowsing man's heartbeat. Otherwise, here is folk music of a raw, nearly confrontational nature, sung by musicians who have had to adopt piercing, childlike voices in order to communicate in open spaces.

RAJASTHAN CHANTS DE PALAIS ET DE DESERTS

WINGHAM 3586112 2CD

This ravishing music from the Indian subcontinent zone of Rajasthan has desert ambience galore trapped within every track. As the hammerin' sets up its horsemen drove and the bowed sarangi wails an oily counterpart, vocalists lament lost loves, protest cruel punishments, celebrate the singular qualities of young women and recount historical tales. Their songs embody the best aesthetics of diverse Indian and Pakistani styles, while steering free of any formal genre constraints. The torch singer intensity of *gawali*, the fine-hair modulations of Hindustani classical technique, the full-bodied rhythms of Carnatic song are all thrills within this music's rapturous weave. The commanding voice of Anwar Khan Margharyan stands out, if only because most ordinary humans simply can't sustain notes that long and at such volume without bringing some form of life support into play.

TARAF DE HAÏDOUKS

BAND OF GYPSIES

MONESUCHGRAMMED 794512 CD

For the uninitiated, the Romanian group Taraf De Haidouks might best be described as equal parts Jewish Klezmer orchestra and Looney Tunes cartoon soundtrack. On *Band Of Gypsies*, compiled from three concerts recorded in Bucharest last year, their crazy gulf music is augmented by the guest appearances of the Koyan Orkestar Gypsy Brass Band and the constant churning of *tutu* *kyosevo* (significatly pronounced *kyosevo*) to the daintiness who dared to follow the latter's solo on 'La Tush'. The booklet documents the picaresque gongas on surrounding these homecomings: the ensemble's manager was set upon by a violent cab driver, its violinist escaped a beating from a jealous wife, and so on. Performed with fury and grace by shiftless undies from the edge of town, this is rock 'n' roll as it should be.

TRINIDAD

SHANGO, SHOUTER & OBEAH:
SUPERNATURAL CALYPSO
FROM TRINIDAD 1943-1940

ROUNDER 6211112011 CD

Trinidad's great musical invention calypso is defined by its fusion of *lilting* melody and arch wordplay. Add the iconography and attendant spiritual fervour of African religion, albeit in a syncretic form adopted by the New World's slave populations, and the results match the rousing energy of Appalachia's *renown* tarts. A selection of Spiritual Baptist (or Shouter) hymns form part of this disc. Previously, the Shouter sect's music was only available on a rare Folkways LP. Calypso veterans such as The Lions, The Careless and Lord Executioner relate island tales, some describing Shango rites, set to distinctly Yoruba tunes. Closest to the *Heavy* of Hall's *vodou* is the Trinidad cult of obeah. Describing the manipulations of an island witch in a scenario resembling that of Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean", Wilton Houdini carries the term 'negromancy' *Wet and wild*, start to finish.

VARIOUS

HOST WORLD OST
SHAMACHE 00000000 CD

Prior to directing *Ghost World*, his feature debut based on the Daniel Clowes comic, Terry Zwigoff was a documentarian with a musical bent, whose films include *Crumb* (his record collector's heart in his sleeve when assembling this soundtrack). Leading off with Mohammed Rafi's recco Bollywood hit "Jeen Peenehami Ho", he goes on to indulge his passion for rare blues recordings (Skip James, Joe Callicut, Robert Wilkins), the gritty pelt of 78 rpm discs very much in evidence. But the wistfully over-amplified Blaahammer are an odd choice. Whatever, this one clunker is more than compensated by the inclusion of several archival cuts from Lionel Belasco, the calypsonian equivalent of Duke Ellington. □

Hip Hop

Reviewed by Dave Tompkins

ARSONISTS

DATE OF BIRTH

MAXATOR/CLEATE CO

Musically, there isn't much difference between *Date Of Birth*, The Arsonists' second album, and their debut, *As The World Burns*. After the latter's release in the autumn of 1999, the quartet was reduced to a trio with the departure of Freestyle and O-Story. As a result, the new disc sounds more serious and determined than their whimsical, joke-laden debut. Both albums, however, share a disconcerting taste for cookie-cutter "banging" beats and nah-nah choruses better suited for live performance than long players. On *Date Of Birth*, Jise, Swei, 79 and Q-Unique pose themselves to be chameleons MCs with extensive vocabularies who trade microphones within the space of a single verse, dropping such gems on "What You Want?" as "I come from the other side like London city traffic/Make behind room ash and act as if I'm Ben Affleck". Q-Unique's production walks a fine line between mainstream savvy and underground aesthetics, often sounding bouncy without being bubbly.

What's lacking on *Date Of Birth*, though, is any sort of excitement. Throughout, they chafe at limiting labels like "independent" or "newiesque", but it's the tension between these two musical visions that often drives some of the best moments Hip Hop. By attempting to please everyone with purloined synopses drums and broad melodies, they've created an album that just floats along with little to distinguish it. Meanwhile, The Arsonists undercut their best trait — freestyleting 16 bars with bluster and raw energy — with mediocre choruses. The only unique quality about *Date Of Birth* is its inexplicably repressed personality. (Moss Reeves)

BUBBA SPARXXX

UGLY EP

INTERSCOPE PROMO '97

Well, Timbaland went down to Georgia, and he was looking for a soul to steal. Instead he found a white guy in overalls named Bubba Sparxx. Not the Bubba who bellyflopped off his roof into a snarl of barbed wire in that Backyard Wrestling documentary, though. In the video, Sparxx wrestles hogs in the dirty-dry mud and calls it "Ugly", after an Amish woman walking with Eustace Bubba. Yet Bubba doesn't kill anybody and he puts his mom in the video. Fresh off cloning a Blackbeak beat, Timbaland link-grabs in the tri-state country with a hill-billy sum and a cabbage patch coo. And Bubba asks, "You hear that beat don'tcha? That's just Timmy talking/Go ahead then dem bone/Fuck it, break a bottle/Let's be honest/Now is the world a date's a misfit." Nope. It's just Bubba and Petey Pablo catching lap lacrimos in the VIP room at Cheetah 3. At the end, Timbaland mixes his bhanga barbecue, flipping into Missy's "Get Ur Freak On", which she says, "Don't copy me." Then back to Bubba. (Note: "Walow!" sounds like "Hello?") Then back to Missy. Then back to my back! I just threw out trying to bust the Rakin line: "Gance, Guc rapped his pants."

CANNIBAL OX

THE F WORD/LIFE'S ILL/METAL GEAR

DEF JUX DIXIE 12"

Yep, Cheriele scared us all when she innocently shrugged off my pink-sweatshirt shoulders and sang, "I didn't mean to turn you on." Friends, how many of us have them but couldn't really have them? "You think you can fit me in that aromatic space between love and hate?" asks Vast while plodding through El-P's padding synths. On the rem, RUC2's guitar broods creepier than creepy guys who always want more than friendship. Our music-o-MC confesses, "I wore my last like a collage, she called it 'Question.' Then Vast slaps on the chorus with an aftertaste sing of asphyxiation. At least your girl isn't giving you that "Just A Friend" song and Bi'zance, "Life's It" is chutz and jetholes and features The Juggernaut, whose long awaited album is stacking up more advance notices than someone who just checked out here. "Metal Gear" appeared in this column about two years ago and you'll see why I caught an elbow incident from their first collab with El-P. Awfully nice of the Herbert Lam cathedral organ to erupt in the starkness. Vast puts a fork in it, "If you're stainless/Act as if I can't see/Imperfection will tarnish your silverware." And lines keep on slipping, slipping into the Medicaid, "held in small digits of children inside a city of lost images".

D-12

PURPLE PILLS

SHADY INT'L 0399 12"

At least they use a different stab for every curse on the otherwise useless radio edit of "That's How". And there's a shaftload, from gurgling straws at Big Gulp Bottom to the Ouch Break/Pleasure bits. Stunned (but not screwed), "Purple Pills" sounds like somebody crunched Nyquil all over the phone (horn) while mistakenly dialing The 45 King's "900 Number", instead of the 911 they'd really need if ingesting all the Quaaludes and blew them by bragging about. Somebody's got the runs, another is missing an arm and they all assume that their baby's mother will date each other. Femmes and toadies wavy their blouse flaps and the sleepy chorus has the Goodie Mob bdespine as O-12's pre-passout, chart members into "somethin' somethin'". It's a blister pack jam but check your medicine cabinet before doing a faceplant in the nearest cow pasture. Some of the lyrics are as wack as O-12's zippy hyperbole name, but sicker is the fact that we sleep better knowing the doce-as-boca harmonica solo (and beat) was on an album that debuted at No 1 in Billboard.

EDAN

PRIMITIVE PLUS

LEWIS RECORDINGS/CDH 12"

Beastie rapper/producer/teen Edan not only shouts out and samples Boston's TDS Mob, but he poses with their 1989 "Scratch Reaction" 12" (a Sketch Plizk blueprint) in the press photo. After that, he could do an album of Ms

Ph Me covers for all I care. On the intro, Edan turns the "Zulu War Chant" rhythm box into the helicopter whining of tube socks full of fuzzy pennies. Then takes a squash through Col Bruce Haack's Moog patch weasing Linn Drums guitars. And that's just the intro intro. Edan says, "I love Hip Hop so much I don't even know what to do with myself!" So he bottles himself with the lights off. The Schoolly D dedication would be comy if he didn't punch the "Magmonia" mess out of his drum box while taking a stab at Mantovino Cudgelling an oil barrel into the shape of Fresh Gordon. "Rapperfection" is so distorted your speakers (and ears) will grow hair.

In fact, a lot of Edan's beats are on the sweaty dance floor. "Deduce" boholes classical piano into uncontrollable fits of will, whatever those may be. "They haven't found a planet that the author's from," Edan's too weak to be way-back songs, revering her in name on sequins on the back of Stevie's shredded acid wash jacket. For who, besides Kool Keith, would decapitate MCs and eat breakfast while listening to Bambataa's "Death Mix"? And I sure it's an original pressing of the bootleg.

45 KING FEATURING LATI & KID CAPRI

LATI ROCKS DA BELLS/PUT THE FUNK OUT

BLAZIN' BLAZERS 12"

Life is "off the hook like the 900 Number". Though the title screams, "Lati Rocks The Bells" is a new song by the same Lati who once penned the relentless "Bolitons". While Lati doesn't feel anybody by dropping his double 's' for an 'i', he affects a Beatusis flow, but doesn't rhyme about ass. Rather: "The far-ass sax coincides with the drummer." Plus, amazing horn vife tracks don't grow on trees. Edan'll call it a "pander your winning answer gameshow" trumpet, but I'm also still wailing for Love. Al-Baile's verse, either way, 45 King lit it. As for the B-Side, I'll wake you when Kid Capri's verse is over.

MIKE LADD

ACTIVATOR COWBOY/FOX WOODS/WORST

ELEMENT OF HIP HOP

COZONE MUSIC COZ0008 12"

As "Activator Cowboy", Mike Ladd plays Electro Horseman with a gritty, cantoring sync loop while Camel Chorus (formerly of Raleigh, North Carolina's The Veldt) stretches nest for NERD on the falsetto refrain. Rolling through Houston, Ladd knocks over two trackstops and fixes his Case Fxxk hair while on the run. On "Fox Woods", Ladd plays the odds with "dog track mystics", affing his way through the flicked smoke butts, dashed cards and sketched nerves outside the Off-Trick Betting Course. Leaving pen shaving to the game show, Ladd "Intests" with Dick Vitale electro, talking about "Depends, the beggar's diaper" and how "These days are bouncing numbers." With a clipped, lit down the drawbridge organ and earnest sweets, "Worst Element Of Hip Hop" is an "instrumental

out" by QJ Fred Gies. A Wakiki voice croaks, "B-beay?" They invented that shit at UCLA to get white girls/19? You wasn't even born when that shit started."

URSULA RUCKER

SUPA SISTA

STUDIO 47 KTH08 CD

Supa Sista is Rucker's first album after half a decade of collaborations with fellow Philly musicians King Britt, Josh Wink and The Roots, as well as European producers 4 Hero and Jazanova. On The Roots' last three albums, Rucker read kitchen sink talk tales that delved into first person accounts of gang rapes, drug dealing and doomed inner city lives, illustrating the slippery balance between survival and immorality. But Supa Sista finds her on more solid moral ground, labeling the Internet as "We compensated wet dream/Soaking/Soaking/Our creativity/Our sensitivity" on "Giggetch" and levying several criticisms at her Black community's treatment of women ("Womanseeng").

On most of the 12 tracks, the words are instant, even haranguing at times, yet Rucker's voice remains melifluous, so whispery it could be a fluttering curtain beating against your pane, rather than a harangue against your consciousness. Sometimes it's difficult to reconcile the two, especially when Rucker sends lines like "the recipients of pale-faced power and privilege" ("Boww Boy") with such grace and love that it's obvious she's taking pleasure in reciting them, even as she uses them to indict her targets. Unlike Sad Williams, another "spoken-word" cat who chose to venture into greater sonic territory on his own debut album, Recker is content to read and sing her words against a backdrop of tastefully blax soul productions contributed by Robert Yancey III, 4 Hero, King Britt and Spaceceme Communion's Jonah Sharp, among others. The result is a very solemn Supa Sista that demands your undivided attention and, eventually, your heart. (Moss Reeves)

SONIC SUM

ROCKET/OSCILLATOR

COZONE MUSIC COZ0009 12"

I knew Sonic Sum's Rob Smith was special when he told me he had a dream about MC Shy O driving a rocket. "Rocket" is urgent, picking up the pace and battered luggage from Sonic Sum's extraordinary 2000 album The Saaty Annex, also released on Cozone. Nelly would went its driving pulse by his hip, though he couldn't possibly hear it. Smith is "overdriven in act", playing an open road test tone on the keyboard as the highway dissolves, dead beat and piano weak dancin' for cover. Dig in. It's personal and cryptic, but if he handed it to us it'd be too much to bear. "Oscillators" is even better with its foreboding organ drone, gurgling meands and "Autopsy" harvy cadence rising rent on utility closets". He also says, "Put a two drink minimum on time-lock so I'm rocked before I get there." Beer him and pay his tablet. □

Jazz & Improv

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

AB BAARS TRIO

SONGS

GEESTROMDEN GGD92 CD

AB BAARS TRIO +

ROSWELL RUDD

FOUR

DATA 022 CD

Reedsman Ab Baars pays tribute to Native American culture, drawing material from tribal sources and reworking Charles Ives's "The Indians" and Ray Nissel's "Cherokee" for good measure. There's not a hint of banal mimicry in this highly disciplined music which continually makes unexpected disclosures. As an improvisor, Baars respects the character of sounds, a close observer of the texture and shape of innumerable notes. Subtaining his understanding of "Indian" ways, he pursues a series of unfamiliar courses, chasing oblique tracks across jazz terrain, accompanied by his precise and vigilant rhythm section, bassist Wilbert De Joode and drummer Marin Van Duynhoven. Four provides an occasion in 1998, in Amsterdam, when they were joined by grizzled frontman Roswell Rudd, whose playing has obvious affinity with Baars's approach. Greeting towards elements that evade conventional musical notation, Roswell's tom-toms, pots, gongs, rasps, splatters and snare. Baars again plays clarinet and tenor. The group's subtle interplay keeps their silent volleys largely in check until late in the set, when common ground has been firmly established and Rudd becomes talkative — with and without his instrument.

JAAP BLONK

AVERSCHUW

KONTRANS 947 CD

VOGELKWARTET

COME TO CATCH YOUR VOICE

LOPLOP L1020 CD

On Averschuw Holland's leading sound poet entangles his voice within a thicker of electronic equipment, Blonk keeps the directness of his customary vocal acrobatics while creating dense textures and extending his range of utterance. The result is a series of lively, abstract yet effectively structured pieces which, by preserving the dynamics of his unmediated performance, avoid the sense of aimless doodling which can sometimes afflict electronic improvisation. Hi-tech ventriloquism gives the apparatus something worthwhile to say. Collaborating with Vogelkwartet, a violin, double bass, trombone and bass clarinet doubling soprano sax), an unprocessed Blonk gets to work on texts by Dylan Thomas. The intrinsic musicality of Thomas's skilfully patterned language is intact when delivered straight. But Blonk's clever, if calculated performance often feels like an embellishment of something that's already sufficiently ornamental.

MR DORGON + LAURA CROMWELL

PROVIDENCE

GUTBRÄIN GGD92 CD

On the cover Dorgon is painted blue and Laura sports a Chesher cat grin. The music should

make you smile too; it sounds so artless and free from ironing self-promotion. Dorgon plays saxophone and clarinet, and Cromwell drums. You can tell this is what they really want to be doing, and that's why they sound so fresh and honest. There's no weighty statement, but lots of pleasing details. The percussion is melodic and undulated; the reeds stink in low moans and introspective groans, then leap out wailing, or lock into a pattern of inquisitive repetition. A solo track each (Cromwell on organ, Dorgon on a noisy eight-string bass) concludes an object lesson in independent thinking and doing.

FLAHERTY/KELLEY/VOIGT/COOK

THE ILYA TREE

BORHOLDER BXR01002 CD

As a lone explorer, Greg Kelley has traced the trumpet to first principles, stripping back the instrument's history to make a music of breath and spittole and metal tubes. For this 1999 session he teamed up with three Massachusetts stalwarts for a free worksheet with obvious lines of contact to a broad jazz past. Drummer Launice Cook has worked with Bill Cook and, alongside bassist John Voigt, has supported saxophonists such as Jezzef Mezzocchio and Sabir Mateen. Here it's Paul Flaherty wading alto and tenor; his approach indebted to the music's angriest years. Kelley's own recollection seems to encompass Barber, Miles as well as Don Cherry, but he's continuously edging further out into spaces where odd stylized juxtapositions turn allusiveness into invention.

FRODE GJERSTAD TRIO

THE BLESSING LIGHT:
FOR JOHN STEVENS

CADENCE JAZZ CJR1120 CD

Norwegian reedman Gjersetad remembers drummer Stevens, his long-time associate in the group Detail, who died in 1994. After his trio with William Parker and Hamid Drake, Gjersetad here interacts with fellow Norwegians Paal Nilssen-Love on drums and Øyvind Storstein on bass. Stevens would have been at home with the defining paradoxes of their music — at once tight and loose, free and controlled; separate voices wholeheartedly engaged in collective expression. Nilssen-Love captures something of Stevens's characteristic energy and buoyancy at the kit. Storstein is amanuensis fractionally and resistent, Gjersetad soaks and swoops restlessly, searching for improvisatory triggers across the full range of his clarinet and alto sax. This three-part tribute does full justice to the drummer's memory and that's saying a great deal.

HERBIE HANCOCK

FUTURE 2 FUTURE

TRANSPAC MUSIC TRASHY CD

Arch connoisseur Bill Laswell produced Future 2 Future and it bears his eclectic stamp. Chaka Khan adds a groovy vocal to "The Essence"; Guest input from Dr Rob Swift and A Guy Called Gerald form suitable feedback loops for the Headturners legacy. Saxophonist Wayne Shorter, drummer Jack DeJohnette and bassist Charles

Moffett also appear; and even a posthumous spot for Tony Williams's drumming. Even so, the album is unstacking. Some parts are stagnant; others suggest ways ahead and, hopefully, out. Hancock's desire to find a wide audience has led him into a few blind alleys but he's too true a musician to linger long at a dead end.

THE RAPHE MALIK QUARTET

LOOKING EAST: A SUITE IN THREE PARTS

BORHOLDER BXR01003 CD

Malik's name immediately evokes major recordings by pianist Cecil Taylor from the late 1970s, where he contributed spikier trumpet. His playing on the concert recording, made in Boston in 1999, bears familiar hallmarks of rapidity and hand brilliance. As a composer he shares Taylor's advanced awareness of how scale can mould listening, and this lengthy suite successfully reconciles improvisatory immediacy with an overarching form. Sabir Mateen, playing various reeds and bass, is a rugged fall. Larry Roland holds steady on bass, while drummer Cody Moffett defines light and driving contours.

MARSH/ZERANG/WRIGHT/BERNDT

THAT NOTHING IS KNOWN

RECORDED 029 CD

Four seasoned musicians with different backgrounds meet as a quartet for the first time on a 1997 radio session in Chicago. Their improvisations certainly merit wider exposure. Michael Zerang drums, Jack Wright and John Berndt play saxophones. Berndt also deploys hornendo instruments, whist, with Bob Marsh's electronic shadings and imaginative vocal interplay, carry the session beyond routine free blowing.

WILLIAM PARKER

SONG CYCLE

BORHOLDER BXR01011 CD

Recorded with Eliot Christ's voice in March 1993, and Lisa Sklaroff's voice with Yuko Fujimura or piano in October 1991, the focus here is on bassist Parker as reflective writer. Doubtless he views composition as part of the same musical continuum as his improvisations with Charlie Gayle, Peter Brötzmann, David S Ware and more, but this time the set cuts apart from those robust outings. Both singers stretch out from the songbom's core, adding risk to Parker's sober and dignified statements.

MARC RIBOT

SAINTS

ATLANTIC 7567854912 CD

Ribot's solo guitar album may prove too stark for some, but it distils the essence of his many playing contexts. It is as if he's chopped by to play whatever takes his fancy; it's that informal, in defiance of major label status. He subordinates technique to impact and leaves flashier players locked in self-absorption. The opener's tremulous fire recalls Hans Reichel. But as title and material ("Holy, Holy, Holy," "Witches & Devils") testify, Albert Ayler is Saint's presiding spirit.

MIKE STERN

VOICES

ATLANTIC 7587834182 CD

As slick as it gets, despite the presence of saxophonist Michael Brecker and drummer Dennis Chambers, alongside electric guitarist Shem. His music dissolves into the ether as soon as it emerges. He accommodates singers comfortably within a set of entirely unscripted tones. Largely wordless, his songs are sung in enigmatic voices in a formulaic guitar-led group concocted in the wake of Pat Metheny.

MALACHI THOMPSON

TALKING HORNS

DELMARK 06022 CD

Adam Thompson thrives alongside Hamer, Blaett's baritone and Oliver Lake's alto, with a rhythm section of pianist Willie Pickens, bassist Harrison Bankhead and drummer Reggie Nicholson. The playing is a pungent antidote to formalism. It's roister and daring in equal measure, steeped in black American music history, yet utterly here and now.

HENRY THREADGILL & MAKE A MOVE

EVERYBODY'S MOUTH'S A BOOK

PIPI 010 CD

It starts with the luminous chamber jazz of "Phantom Inside Straight", with resonant sonorities from Threadgill's flute, Brian Carrott's vibraphone and the acoustic guitar of Brandon Ross flowing over Stomu Takeuchi's sprightly bass and Dennis Pravato's mettulous drumming. Elsewhere, when Threadgill doubles alto, Carnie Mamone and Ross smooches on electric, hectic activity supersedes the radiant pastoral mood. Uses intertwine as they coil and uncoil, but in Threadgill's arrangements they always remain clearly defined, hamoised yet contrasting colours brightly illuminated.

FEDERICO UGHI WITH DANIEL CASTER

ASTONISHMENT

877 6671 CD

Daniel Ughi, who studied with pianist Paul Bley, is an economical percussor, skilled in accentuating details and tactfully orchestrating melodic lines, using voice and samples as well as drums. He's the ideal complement to multi-instrumentalist Caster whose tuneful inventiveness on trumpet, clarinet, saxophones and flute receives welcome exposure here.

DHAFER YOUSSEF

ELECTRIC SUFI

INNA 9412 CD

Rabi Abu-Khalil proved the viability of the lute as well as an instrument within jazz. Tunisian Youssef settles for a looser fusion of Arabic tradition, jazz and more on a beautifully recorded album that reunites his sinuous oud and emotive voice with the trumpet of Markus Stockhausen and bamboo flute of Deepak Ram, collaborator on Malik (1999). Guitarist Wolfgang Matulap and percussionist Mino Cinelu also appear.

Outer Limits

Reviewed by Will Montgomery

RICHARD CHARTIER

SERIES
LINE 001 CD

Sometimes the 'lower case music' mindset threatens to shift into a debilitating intransigence or a confined diffidence. Point list electronica such as Richard Chartier's *Series* – released last year but just awarded an honourable mention at this year's Pro Ars Electronica in Linz – is a reminder how confident and engaged such music can be. As with some of the work of Bernhard Günter (for whose label *triste dissonance* has recorded), Chartier's music can be almost aggressively quiet. The sounds have been mastered so low that you have to crank up the volume to discern them. Even then they retain an air of 'quiescence'. Such evasive sound events inevitably get tangled up with the surrounding environment. But it's worth stretching the ears in search of Chartier's sequences of exquisitely scripted sonic events, as gossipy detail bodies forth out of the shadow. Superb.

CLIMAX GOLDEN TWINS DREAM CUT SHORT IN THE MYSTERIOUS CLOUDS

METHE 010 CD

A dense set of short recordings from a mysterious Seattle outfit, Dream... features splintered punk miniatures, tones and drones, field recordings, ghostly piano and ancient vinyl. Everything has been worked over and left in a sorry state of repair. This album's doses are hanging off their hinges and it's got dry rot in the rafters. The dominant sound is an eccentric, minimalist made up of rattles, whines and scuffling sounds – a deftly hybrid, di-fitting set of compositions. Dream suits the aesthetics. More than that the tracks here come in at under two minutes and there's a merciful absence of desire to extend inspection ad infinitum. Meanwhile, while vinyl fetishists should keep a lookout for the LP version released on *Anomalous Records*.

COELACANTH THE CHRONOGRAPH

PARTITION PI-CD

This is the first release from California's Coelacanth, who comprise lower case composer Loren Chasse and The Wire's own Jim Hayes (who can often be found hoarding this very page). "I just thought," says Hayes, of his activities beyond the outer limits. That's an apt enough description of the mouldering, unstable music on *The Chronograph*. The pieces are edited improvisations – treatments of piano and pure performance built around layered loops. Chasse and Hayes create a thick, murky soup, dense with activity. Drums undredge the action, though the duo exhibit a preference for soft, amorphous intermissions coating them. The most atmospheric piece is the alluringly titled 'how bodies become phosphorescent', where basso puttering sounds and an exhausted whine serve to produce feelings of great tension. Though thoroughly distressed, the album lives as a fragile concretisation of decay.

WERNER DAFELDECKER & BORIS D HEGENBART

EIS 9
GROB 519 CD

Austrian, top class improvisation built from percussion, guitars, electronics, a sampler and sundry unnamed devices. The seven pieces are oblique soundworks, explorations of textual and tonal qualities that keep the musicality of most Improv at a long arm's length. The work is about sounds in isolation, with no pretence at 'dialogue' or tension-release dynamics. It can sound foreboding at first, but eventually Polwiesch's Werner Dafeldecker and Boris Hegenbart pull you into their crepuscular soundworld. Dafeldecker's guitar is extremely dry and scarcely deployed. Yet many of the dominant sounds are percussive, and the duo seem to have an interest in the self-sufficient fragment, reminiscent of the Italian avant-garde composer Luigi Nono. Quiet music, undeniably resistant to normal means of gaining purchase but highly rewarding nonetheless.

IAN EPPS AUDIOPHONE

DEAD CEO 16TR CD

A Chicago multimedia artist, Epps has produced a set of febrile miniatures, consisting of 66 tracks spread over 46 minutes, several just a few seconds long. A good number of the tracks are based on the same source material, a playful glitched phrase. This lends a homogeneous quality to his material, which has similar listener friendliness to his own. Some of it is spare and simple, but the longer tracks are thickly layered organisations of sound. For all the jerky glitch material, Epps manages to sustain a lively, chime-free mood. His habit of breaking the episodes track by track leaves him free to repeat a phrase a few times as a distinct track rather than looping it, and by the time *Audiophone* has reached track 66, it has pointed the way down numerous witty and provocative pathways without outlaying its welcome.

JOHN HUDAK & JASON LESCALLEET

FIGURE 2
INTRATRANCE INT016 CD

Figure 2 is an unissued document of a performance that brought together haku-stamped sound artist and poet Hudak and New England based composer Lescalleet. Hudak also uses field recordings (see *The Wire* 209), while Lescalleet works principally with reeds to reed tapes. It's a softy bleeding, slow moving album, characterised by gentle modulations and subtle shifts. The pair like to explore atmospheres of muddiness and muted uncertainty. Athymic clanks and thuds accompany groaning loops; high-pitched whistles ride over sudden, rasping metal sounds. It's a ghostly piece of work but patchy and never more than the sum of its parts. The sounds are strong but the pace and direction of the work's development leaves the listener clamouring for a spot of judicious editing.

KOZO INADA

A []
STAALPLAAT ST164 CD

KOZO INADA

D []
STAALPLAAT ST164 CD

These short CDs (13 and 33 minutes respectively) from Staalplaat's 'material series' showcase various excursions in sonic punish. A []'s main track begins with a haunting series of clicks, changing in volume, tonality and stereo placement. The starkness of the realisation sucks the listener into the variations as the track slowly develops and then gives way to silence, followed eventually by a deep, culminating rumble. The next track is like the inards of a howler. The last piece is the strongest: two minutes of Kubist-like treated liquid sounds that build up to an ionic climax. D [] begins with a mobile hissing sound, gradually brought up to painfully distorted static. It's followed by a modulating throbbing that slowly draws higher frequency tones and crackles to rest, while the third and fourth play with static in ways that recall Francisco López. But ultimately Inada's sounds don't elicit the rapt involvement that their isolation demands.

BRANDON LABELLE AUTOMATIC RADIO

FRINGES FRINGES 00 CD

On this disc's three performances, LA sound artist Brandon LaBelle evidently brings into question whether abstract sonic engagements with 'place' live up to the promise of significant coherence invested in them. 'Speaking In Tongues' plays situated human voice sounds against moving cattle and a background of crackling. 'Multitude-Solitude' is a radio work combining crowd sounds recorded in Vienna and material picked up by contact mics on Leibniz's shoes during a walk around the city. For 'Pillow Talking', a collaboration with Louis Chesse, he draws on a performance by John Hudak mediated by two contact mics – one in the performance space and the other in a metal cooking funnel in LaBelle's mouth. Primping musings on the artist's interest in issues concerning the body and public space is about as rewarding as the piece gets. Stemmed from their conceptual framework, the sounds themselves are short on intrinsic interest.

FRANCISCO LÓPEZ & ZBIGNIEW KARKOWSKI WHINT

ABSOLUTE ABS00300 3XCD

The fascinating double set on López's Absolute label was initiated in San Francisco, where he and Karkowski (normally based in Japan) generated a core set of sounds from white noise. Then they each worked on these same elements in separate studios to produce independent pieces. Remarkable for the variety of shapes it extracts from such a limited palette, Karkowski's composition is a piece of ebbing and flowing intensities, with sounds gushing from speaker to speaker and climactic rashes until 15 minutes into its conclusion, it enters an anaroxic thrashing state before ending in pulsating static.

Though less expressionistic and intense, López's companion piece is unsurprisingly similar to Karkowski's. Changes of direction are either staggeringly abrupt or extremely slow and incremental. Animated by a solitary low hum, it idles on the undifferentiated, coarsing energy of white noise. Until the last 27 minutes, which are given over to a hiss so faint, you have to crank the volume to hear it. If you can rouse yourself

PIMMON

ORQUESTA DEL ARRURRURZ
STAALPLAAT ST166 CD

PIMMON

ELECTRONIC TAX RETURN
MOTOCULTURE MECW010 CD

Pimmon is an Australian electronist who mingles touches of the ambient lyrism of Fennesz with a tougher appetite for crusty shards of digital noise. *Electronic Tax Return* feeds on audibly melodic material. He releases pitched tones into a jagged landscape of grit, broken petrels and looming sonic coulées. Making brilliant use of such backdrops, he carefully shepherds more defined events in front of them. *Orquesta Del Arrurruz* is also terrific. Though only 30 minutes, it is packed with unpredictable incident, some elicited by classical samples. Although Pimmon stakes the purpury of minimalism, his real allegiance is to clashing textures on a vibrant canvas. On the evidence here, he has a rare ability to compose coherent soundworks from scattered sources.

PURE

LOW
STAALPLAAT ST149 CD

Yet more austere packaged minimalism, this time from Austria's Pure. The first two tracks are drones, unashamedly but most happens in the third piece. Working swooping tones in a dense, layered arrangement, Low becomes a wonderful, clangorous mess, as sounds jostle and shout across each other. Over ten minutes, it constantly shifts around a basic template, yet somehow achieves resounding calm. At moments a whiff of psychedelia recalls a defused Masami Akita. The last track is based around a thicker drone, then with each source emerging over it playback head. But at 17 minutes, it's Pure snooze.

RICHARD YOUNGS & SIMON WICKHAM-SMITH LAMMERGEREIER

WIP SE CD

Welcome rough edges from two enduring purveyors of hirsute sonic adventure. Their mainly textural pieces treat no solid sounds. *Lammergeriereier*'s wayward sprawl is a long way from the strictures of doctrinaire minimalism. Squalling tones are set against off-leter bedroom percussions. The artist's occasionally rosy, pastoral glow is erased by the strangled voice on the fifth piece, a creation of almost unutterable upness (cultivated upness being a salient feature of the duo's early work). The rest is high grade, lo-fi, squelchy peg electronics – unusual, awkward and uncompromising. □

Print Run

New music books and more: devoured, dissected, dissed



William S. Burroughs with Brian Gysin, whose cut-ups let the mice into the Beat Hotel

THE BEAT HOTEL: GINSBERG, BURROUGHS & CORSO IN PARIS, 1957-1963

BARRY MILES
ATLANTIC BOOKS HK\$20

BY JULIAN COWLEY

Towards the end of this book, Barry Miles quotes one of William S. Burroughs's famous pronouncements: "My goal in life is total anonymity," he said, taking pleasure in being known as "El Montre Invisible." Yet he moved steadily out of obscurity towards celebrity, not least because writers like Miles have narrated the oral Beat biography. The genre has involved a hefty amount of sensationalist gnawing, but in the hands of a responsible recorder like Miles, who knew the mice in question well and understands the mainstays of their creativity, an account of Beat lives can cast light on their writing, the stuff we can all get to know.

The actual Beat Hotel was at 9 Rue de Lécoq in Paris's Sixth Arrondissement, and during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso lived in its shabby rooms and rat-infested corridors. Meanwhile, their friend Jack Kerouac desecrated his patricians at home. The Beat Hotel was an old-fashioned bohemian enclave, but was also an energy centre and alternative community where these writers developed their art in a climate of perpetual indulgence and experimentation. For the Beats there was no protective wall around literature. Writing was continuous with other forms of experience, as it had been for other Americans, from Henry Miller to Henry Thoreau and beyond. When the Beats wrote, hunger for

drugs and sexual excess flowed into their words along with their passion for arcane knowledge and intense wisdom.

Miles established friendships with them later, yet he has the knack of conveying the excitement of that place and that time as though drawing upon firsthand experience. He doesn't obtrude as narrator of events and sketches of personalities, yet he clearly understands their motivation and their modes of action. Paris at that time offered greater personal freedom than the States. It was bubbling with Existentialism and the Absurd, but for Ginsberg and Corso Europe also meant contact with history. Percy Shelly was the main inspiration for Gregory the Poet, and Miles depicts the prison-hardened, "wine and vomit stained" streetboy cravenging links to his Romantic neo-Patrician precursors. Ginsberg pruned Rimbaud's poetic to his will, dressed of William Blake and paid homage to Cubist poet Guillaume Apollinaire. Hash, heroin and bisexual encounters are reported in a matter of fact way, but the sounder picture shows Ginsberg in England visiting Stenberg, and rating the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum as the "greatest thing in Europe".

In Paris Ginsberg first read the Russian poet Mayakovsky, and he also investigated French Surrealist writing. In person the Americans met heroic figures such as Marcel Duchamp, Dada chieftain Tristan Tzara, controversial novelist Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Henri Michaux, peerless poet of hallucinogenic vision. When Ginsberg met asturated poet Edith Siewell, he invited the 70 year old to submit a naked photograph for an anthology he was preparing

and offered her a joint, which she declined. Any lines that might put them in touch with the spirit of Antonin Artaud were evidently pursued. Eventually the group got to listen excitedly to Artaud's suppressed radiotherapy classic "Pour En Finir Avec Le Jugement De Dieu". Sensitive to such paths to the vitalising past, the Beats were also alert to the connecting currents with current activity and Miles's cast of characters is nicely varied. It ranges from Madame Rachas, owner and diminutive overseer of their towny paradise, to Jacques Stern, wealthy, coquettish, erudite junkie. It includes Simon Watson-Taylor, translator of Alfred Jarry's erotic work, artist Jean-Jacques Lebel, jazz drummer Kenny Clarke and shrewd pornographer Maurice Girodias, the reluctant publisher of the Naked Lunch. There's no shortage of intrinsic interest in such figures and Miles's relaxed style allows them to play their part in the Beat scenario without ganst trapping and cheap fills.

The first half of the book belongs primarily to Ginsberg. The second is dominated by Burroughs and his circle, notably Iren Sommerville, Sinclair Beiles and Brian Gysin. Gysin, who fictionalised the Beat Hotel in his novel *The Last Museum*, continues to grow in stature in histories of Beat life. Miles stresses poet and painter Gysin's significance, both as a innovator and as an invaluable prep for Burroughs's creativity. Burroughs is seen consuming large quantities of pargone, taking volubly about junk, drinking endless cups of tea and voraciously reading about obscure diseases. He also appears surprisingly vulnerable, shedding tears when his tender feelings for Ginsberg meet with friendship

rather than reciprocated love. Such an image might add another dimension to our understanding of his firecracker satirical fiction. Miles is good at humanising these legendary figures in ways that don't diminish them.

The cut-up technique Gysin discovered sent Burroughs into a fertile frenzy of expository writing and assembling. Long sessions were also spent with the flicking Dream machines, vision-inducing revolving cylinders created by Gysin with Sommerville. That pair staged mixed media performances which led to a fruitful liaison with sound poets (Bernard Heideck and Hern Chapin). Gysin's "The Permutated Poems" were broadcast on the BBC, which showed early interest in Beat literature. The broadcast brought beached Australian Beat David Allen to the hotel, in advance of his work with Set Machine and Gong.

Flashbacks and recollections have their place in this busy account, where mood takes precedence over strict chronology. Ginsberg's relationship with his mother is recounted, as is the trauma experienced by Burroughs in the nursery. While the hotel is portrayed as a base for activity rather than a closed domain, broader cultural issues are easily addressed. Oddly when Miles does speculate on the specific impact of Burroughs's cut-ups, he finds their influence in the premon notes of Antonio Gramsci, who died in 1937. That being emor apart, the book is as faithful to detail as it is to the Beat spirit. Corso's view was that "this beat generation" nonsense lessens the poetic intent. Miles doesn't play down the sex and drugs, but he does insist that above all the Beats were in love with writing. □

WORKS 1965-2000

DAN GRAHAM
RICHTER VERLAG HKR \$68

BY ALAN LIGHT

Dan Graham is a New York based artist and conceptualist whose influence is strongly felt in the work and ideas of his friends Glenn Branca and Sonic Youth — the name will be familiar to anyone who's taken a serious interest in their music. Graham's partiality to "amateur photography" and his idea of art as a hobby rather than a profession would certainly explain the affinity for punk. Although he ran a gallery in 1965 which exhibited works of the nascent minimalist scene, he soon concentrated on writing, performance, photography, video art, later, architecture. His best known tangible works are his groundbreaking "Homes For America" photography series of suburban houses and his various large scale, two-way mirror constructions. The catalogue to a major retrospective offers an exhaustive, year by year survey of his efforts, with a page devoted to each and every project, but most significantly features a series of interviews with Bianca, Kim Gordon, Thurston Moore, Tony

Dunster and others. These shed light on Graham's collaborative role in the late 70s/early 80s New York avant-garde music scene, and reveal him as a kind of older brother in terms of shredding the art and rock worlds.

Gordon originally met Graham in Los Angeles (and also encountered artist Mike Kelley at one of Graham's lectures there, while Kelley was arguing the merits of The Stooges and The New York Dolls with him), and moved into the apartment below Graham's soon after she moved to New York. He asked her to participate in an all-girl group performance he was organizing, which would up being part of a feature in Boston curated by then student Christian Marclay. Moore soon moved in with Gordon and began hanging out with Graham, who had already heard about while working on a short-term project for Vito Acconci. Both were punk rock obsessives, and Graham had documented all of the No Wave scene on tape. Moore was now introducing him to the hardcore punk scene, which Graham documented to some extent on video (including one memorable Minor Threat show). This informed his classic video *Rock My*

Religion, which equates Shaker circle dancing with the mosh pit, and the performances of Pettibone, Jim Morrison and others. Sonic Youth's song "Shaking Hell" was inspired by the video, and Graham's photos feature in the artwork of their albums *Siester* and *NYC Ghosts And Flowers*.

Bianca talks about Graham's encouragement of his No Wave group's efforts (co-founder Jeff Lahr introduced him to Graham), and Graham co-produced a single by his subsequent group The Stasis. Bianca also relates how through Graham's efforts he and, later, Son's Youth were able to gig in Europe, and, along with Berlin's Einstürzende Neubauten, find an audience in the art world. Dunster sums it up best: "He was always giving me Fall records and Branca and Sonic Youth. He was relentless in terms of his ability to re-contexualize these things into an overall global structure of the way art and music were being made at the time. He really went outside of that hazy punk conceptual position and that really was very important for me because that's what my generation wanted to do — to go back more into these pop cultural situations."

Beyond these specific connections, we learn that both Graham and Bruce Nauman's use of time delay in their late 80s/early 90s video works was partially inspired by its presence in Terry Riley and Steve Reich's music (both Graham and Nauman participated in performances of Reich's *Pendulum Music* at the time, and Graham got contributions from both Reich and Philip Glass for an issue of the art magazine *Aspen* he guest edited). While the book has the requisite critical assessments of Graham's art, there's also an essay by John Miller called "Now Even The Pigs Are Grooving", which examines rock's importance to Graham in depth and describes one Doors concert in Detroit, in which Morrison masterfully taunts the crowd (which must have left a serious impression on Iggy Pop).

Unfortunately none of Graham's insightful articles on popular culture are reprinted here, (for these, seek out the 1993 collection *Rock My Religion*). Even so, this does represent the most extensive history of Graham's work so far. A must for anyone tracing the art/punk crossover of the last two decades. □

LIKE YOUNG: JAZZ AND POP, YOUTH AND MIDDLE AGE

FRANCIS DAVIS
DA CAPO HKR \$26

BY BEN WATSON

Francis Davis is a leading American jazz critic, and from the opening sentence of this collection — "Miles Davis detested liner notes, regarding them almost as a form of insult" — you sense the special combination of staved values, academic learning and nuanced opinion which characterizes a genuine culture. American critics allow themselves plusher sentences than their nervous European counterparts, and Davis pades in data, asides and encapsulated opinions with enviable skill. If his prose resembles a luxury car, it's because his readers don't just want to get from A to B, they have the wealth and leisure to expect an enjoyable ride as well. Many of these pieces were published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, where Davis is a contributing editor, but there are also pieces from *The New York Times* and *Village Voice*, mostly from the last five years.

The conceit of this collection is that it's about age and social identity as Davis looks at pop music too. A section on voices includes Hoagy Carmichael and Frank Sinatra, and the last, chapter deals with Burt Bacharach, Bruce Wilson, The Velvet Underground and Don DiMucci. The Don streak is temetic, and is wisely placed last. In 1959, DiMucci had the famous hit "Teenager In Love" with his group The Belmonts, and has

since been through hell again Christianity and the evangelical music scene. In 1989, he was looking for another hit, so DiMucci, his manager Zach Gluckman and Davis met up in his original Bronx neighbourhood for a walk about, during which they discussed poverty, gangs and drugs. Then there's a visit to DiMucci's residence in swanky Boca Raton, Florida, Davis can drop references to Walter Benjamin's "The Work Of Art In The Age Of Mechanical Reproduction", but remains streetwise. His account of who's who on Belmont Avenue and 187th Street — the businesses, churches and hussies — is a gem, a minute guide to the student geopolitics of working class New York. It's this awareness of social fact which makes his writing on jazz glow. Nevertheless, jazz is Davis's forte, so the section that deals with Bud Powell and Dave Douglas, *Kind Of Blue* and *Wildflowers*, Rahsaan and Drnette, Wynton Marsalis and Ken Burns, and other contemporary problems in jazz is the meat of the book. (And if your definition of musical torture is "Rantings Keep Falling On My Head", you'll find the chapter on Bacharach hairy gang.) There is a fantastic interview with Sun Ra: as with interviews with William S Burroughs at his most psychotic, you decide the man is clinically insane, only to marvel at the poetry and politics. His barnhouse cracks open Some of Ra's leftist wordplay — he reveals shit in every crucifix and Gamma as the third stone from the sun — is priceless.

Although Davis's function is to provide consumer guidance (in an account of a holiday in Santa Cruz, he is practically writing restaurant reviews), that he can write so intelligently and politically testifies that jazz is the music of a vast, century long struggle for civil rights. In England, prose this extended and sophisticated would never be allowed new anything which questioned the nation's pinched, middleclass concept of culture (London Review Of Books is currently involved in a heated debate about music, all centred on Edward Said's ardent interpretation of Brahms). The high status of jazz in the States bestows another benefit: Davis can go from technical issues of chord choice to national foreign policy in an unstrained way, something that would sound pretentious and begin for anyone writing about *Classical* or *Redodeo*. He quotes Wynton Marsalis saying that jazz "gives us a glimpse into what America is going to be like when it becomes itself", and complains that he is "talking in the way presidential candidates are prone to". Although, unlike the Stax protestants, Davis seems to believe that today's American "democracy" somehow delivers, he hits the nail on the head here: the problem with Marsalis's bullish is not musical, but political.

Davis's judgments are not always sound. He is simply wrong when he says Cassandra Wilson's talents are charismatic rather than musical, implying he has never seen her direct

her musicians in person, a stunning example of leadership. His disapproval of saxophonist James Carter's honking "sesquisses" shows little affinity for R&B, as does his foofed condemnation of gangsta rap as immoral (how can someone who writes so persuasively about Elvis Presley's musical abilities — and had me running to play my copy of the *Milton Duffin Quartet* album — fail to clock the lunckhead genius of Eminem?). His enthusiasm for Dave Douglas comes across as a response to calculating competence rather than real artistic status. When he thanks Lou Reed for reminding us, in *Songs For Drella*, that "nobody lives forever", Davis packs sententiousness about mortality with all the punch of a visor at the graveside. He repeats Gunther Schuller's doax that Lester Young was the most innovative jazzman in jazz between Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker, when anyone who listens to jazz from the bottom up knew it had to be Coleman Hawkins.

Yet, despite these lapses, Davis has got the ear, independence and courage to see through current trends and type to identify Muhal Richard Abrams as the supreme composer in jazz today, and to distinguish Bill Frisell's measured Americanism from his haphazard postmodernism of his downstage colleagues. These kind of judgments make Francis Davis's essays a gift from America you don't want to smack in the mouth. □

THE GRAFFITI SUBCULTURE: YOUTH, MASCULINITY AND IDENTITY IN LONDON AND NEW YORK

NANCY MACDONALD

PALGRAVE HSK 645

BY REMI ABAS

Despite its preoccupation with language, graffiti culture has long been HipHop's mute element. Never managing to capture the mindshare held by rap music or breakdancing, and occupying a satellite space, part removed yet intensely entwined in HipHop, to most people graffiti culture is, as Nancy Macdonald puts it, "background scenery, an urban white noise". Without a coherent voice, its place within HipHop's pantheon has been contested. A while back graffiti legend Future 2000 paid off graffiti has no true connection with HipHop culture. Through his eyes graffiti was part of a street

culture turnstile bed together by marketers to produce a convenient sales package for non-initiates to consume. However, for many HipHop insiders graffiti is an integral element, so integral that subsuming it to assure authenticity as graffiti is the silent bearer of HipHop's *weltanschauung*, subsuming to its ideals guarantees instant integrity.

Viewing graffiti as standard bearer is an interesting way to approach *The Graffiti Subculture*. As an examination of graffiti's internal workings, Macdonald's ethnographic standpoint proves an illuminating one. She gets dirty, you can smell the pungent aroma of spray cans as she jettisons academic frostiness in favour of immersion. She talks to old and new writers, stars and unknowns. Shadowing writers as they create, she unveils the norms existing in graffiti culture.

The trouble is, before you get here you have to

leaf through Macdonald's intellectual agenda. This text is densely academic, as she spends the first few chapters charting her epistemological perspective. This she does by chopping the theories of a host of sociological elites. Choosing the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies as her man toes, she paints their man failings as an inability to define culture in non-political terms. Tied to Marxist theory, the CCCS idea of sub-cultural agency sinks under the weight of political dogma, particularly when witnessed from the vantage point of hindsight. For two comes in the guise of Postmodernists who, in her mind, falsely dictate a position of agitator relativity while holding onto the voice privileges afforded by their academic learning. The defensive context she provides is as much a claxon bawl at the elated academy as it is a marker to us that she is aware of her outsider status. Which is to say, you

have quite some work to do before you get to the book's premise.

When you get there, *Graffiti Subculture* provides some illuminating insights from Future 2000, graffiti documentarist Henry Chalfant and Gora, which elucidate the tenets of graffiti culture. What *Urfta* is an exploration of masculinity in the world of graffiti. Also covertly housed in the book's ellipsis is HipHop's ideology. And with HipHop's fundamentalist wing currently growing, an examination of the graffiti mind provides a purely historical reading, choosing instead to give a more penetrative vision of the contemporary male tagger. Her particular reading of graffiti may not appeal to those seeking a linear history, but it does provide a multitude of first person perspectives, illuminating the motives behind the culture. □

BANANAFISH #15

TEARAWAY HOUSE \$11

BY BEN WATSON

Bananafish, a magazine plus compilation CD published in San Francisco, has finally located prose stylists adequate to the global audie-babble of self-released noise, musical sabotage, small label improv and DIY cut-up: cultural products whose sheer quantity and barbed intelligence are custom-built to weed the antennae of conventional criticism. The writers – John Cusack, S. Glass, Fronz Finesse, Roland Woods, Stanley Jason Zappa, Alessandro Moretti III – treat these unlikely names which often signify a spasm of cultural dust. The writing is imaginative, fast and allusive, untransmuted by any anxiety that readers won't be hip enough to decode multi-jawn references to TV trash, foreign words, arcane composers, showbiz, rockbiz or Dogger. Artistic and unofficial (and downright non-) cultures are merged and submerged in a slurry of bad manners, insult and obscenity.

Lauderous, surrealists, freestyle clausps jump into Jayceon wordplay, suggesting that techniques previously restricted to Language Poetry could move on down to titillate the great unversed: goemo journalism that swapped rock gods and drug givings for Free Improvisation and DIY cassettes. Amidst the verbal sludge swim aly labels whispering some of the brightest, underground insights since Stefan Zweig's *Death in Ecstasy* just became available exclusively to the politically incorrect.

Bananafish writers are granted pegs upon which to unroll their will to wall rants and love letters to the insomni agitators of contemporary music: Maximum Rock 'N' Roll for readers who've now experienced Vivaldi and Pete Mayo. Omnithe and Lemmy Wynette (maybe wage labour and in chronic too). Early issues of Bananafish were so checkered with chit offense it seemed like just another dose of bad taste prankster Americana, unshaken by a refusal to distinguish between self-publicising bad boy avant garde and the

redundant revolution of authentic restructure lists. The fact that Bananafish is now accessible to those unimpressed by Frisco cult stylism probably means it's "sold out". Our god.

The accompanying CD mines correspondences between epochs from apathetic cultural zones. Seguing the demented vocals of Am-Honey and the barking, close-miked bawled bass of Reg Ego into *Écoute* (!) For Computer-Assisted Sounds by Romanian Ana-Maria Avram is inspired. Cover artist Christine Shields' surrealist nursery rock, while John Cusack shows his lip to the latest developments in the short American prose poem, while Kukla mashes Solyent Green in an aphasic dines. There's sound collage of seagulls and syrups by Leopold's Volcano The Bear (a Radioactive Sparrow who swap Johnny Burnette's rockabilly for Robert Wyatt's ambience). In their interview, VTB members diss "make-it" rock groups, ill-equipped tours, the unshenability of joy in music and 70s kids TV in 'Hers, Avram is caustic about the classical world and its terror of sonic

actuality and improvisation. We're also granted glimpses of her forbidding scales, a gut-string interview about slaughterhouse hygiene and the economics of Mad Cow disease, an interview with cult candid camera duo Coyle & Shape, plus a column where Stanley Jason Zappa clings Society Of The Spectacle, classes 'coime' epigram, and rigidly hairy-Frank Hauertinger's Gonberg as the beginning of the next chapter of post-Coldwave musical evolution (though as a saxophonist himself, Zappa evidently feels he can only critique other players if he can outblow 'em, a recipe for well critique of current jazz qua music).

Between 1927 and 1938, the American journalist Eugene Jolas used a Parisian journal named *transition*: its collective "revolution of the world" was stomped into oblivion by a world war, and remained invisible to a celebrity-fated postwar counter culture. As megalists and materialists like Artigones Maka, Bananafish pushes past the individualistic legacy of Frisco's Beats to reignite transition's funky spirit. □

SELECTED WORKS: 1990-2000

ACHIM WOLLSCHEID

SELEKTION PBK 825

BY MATT PYTTOE

German sound and installation artist Achim Wollscheid prefices this slim photo-based volume – with brief theory-deprived prefatory texts, in his native language and English, by himself, Brandon Labelle and others – with the disclaimer: his work is not the kind that seeks to dominate its own presentation. His sonic and visual installations, such as the 1000 sound-transducers emitting continuous sinewaves at 1500 Hz attached to a wall in the Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, are unfeasible "without a practical connection to a previously existing context". Equally, the works' formal qualities are meant to be developed through, and are often triggered by, movement and feedback from people passing by. So theoretically, and practically, the book should have nothing to offer. Nevertheless, it's a testimony of sorts to an intriguing series of site

specific conceptual works involving sound, light and human movement, which Wollscheid has been pursuing in the last few years in pedestrian spaces or institutional layers, mainly in Frankfurt and Tokyo, as a counterpart to his recorded work for labels like Staatsoper and Mills Plateau. Since the mid-90s, Wollscheid has been a member of the art group Selektion which, originally intended to Situationist and punk, has been increasingly involved with performances investigating theories of communication and technical systems – more Melatun than Duchamp: it's a complex alliance born of the desire for an art that foregrounds contingent elements of experience while aiming to subvert the technological forms that 'control' meaning. These desires find expression in a stylish minimalism combined with an obsession with function and tilt ligibility – an art strangely poised between Bataille and the boulevards. Photographs of crowded streets mix with concrete planks, neon strips and lighting grids.

Many of the works involve 'tracking' and converting phenomena through different sensors and projecting devices, so that people find an everyday space coloured by a rogue system of intelligibility: as with the bridge spanning the entrance to the Krupp steel plant in Bochum, on which 126 pairs of glass were able to light up independently to reflect the movement of passing pedestrians. Wollscheid is captivated by such abstract redimensions and inversions of the real, and this is evident in the sonic work as well, for instance installations which reproduce electronic sounds in interior spaces. He has a long-standing fantasy of producing "an invisible sculpture whose shape was only defined by its being void of sound", a cube of negative ambience staked out in a pedestrian zone. A by-product of this idea was a project that recorded traffic sounds on a street in Kunitachi, Tokyo. These were then amplified and converted into sonic signals, which were re-projected on the other side of the street. Another prototype in

development is a sonic 'companion', a portable cassette box used in which "transforms environmental sounds into parallel sonic structures".

Despite Selektion's rejection of notions of an autonomous art, there is still something proto-utopian about their approach: it involves the desire to exert some kind of transformation on real spaces by a procedure carried out by technical means at an iconic level. In the process it reconnects people with their environment in a counter-intuitive fashion. However, the alliance between art, transformation and technology is an unstable one. Wollscheid's art is as much following in the wake of the increasing extension of technology into lived spaces as resisting this process. It's as likely to become implicated in the development of designer ambiances as subvert them. As with Warhol, the originality comes from the subversion of art and soundwork by technology, rather than the other way round. □



It doesn't seem right to be coloured as white: spectral minstrel Emmett Miller

WHERE DEAD VOICES GATHER

NICK TOSCHES

LITTLE, BROWN & COMPANY HBK \$24.95

BY ALAN CUMMING88

Along with Richard Meltzer and Lester Bangs, Nick Tosches was one of the shamus of US rock writers who really defined the form in the late 60s and early 70s. Of the three, Tosches was always the hardest to pin down, for the music never appeared to be as central to him as to Bangs or Meltzer. With the benefit of hindsight, it now seems like the music, along with the booze, brawds and doze, was just more combustible material to feed Tosches's personal bonfire in which he forged his immediate "tough guy with classical learnings" writing style. And indeed, while his first books dug deep into the neglected musical trash heaps of honky tonk, proto rock 'n' roll and whizbang demigod Jerry Lee Lewis, Tosches hasn't written a book solely about music since the mid-80s. More serious and, more importantly, lucrative pursuits beckoned, and he is recently best known for his *Vanity Fair* writing, and his impressive, even stunning books on Dean Martin and Sonny Liston. The dark currents that drew these men, and the tenebros that bound American popular entertainment to organised crime have provided Tosches with his most fruitful material.

For *Where Dead Voices Gather*, however, Tosches has returned to an obsession that has gnawed at him for nearly 30 years — an obscure yodelling blackface singer and comedian named Emmett Miller who recorded a couple of dozen songs in the late 1920s. Among them, his version of "Loveless Blues" inspired a generation of early

country singers. The eerie and bizarre contours of Miller's "flock voice" form a special space in American history, between Broadway and the Deep South, urban and rural, sucking in the dying breaths of minstrelsy and vaudeville just before their eclipse by recordings, radio and cinema. As Tosches writes it, Miller ties together the "mixed and mongrel bloodlines of country and blues, of jazz and pop, of all that we know as American music." With the recent reawakening in the period before radio and the growing recorded music industry started eroding regional differences, particularly through the released Harry Smith Anthology, *Where Dead Voices Gather* is timely indeed. Even more so in that minstrelsy is viewed as a lunatic and embarrassing陋tique that modern PC attitudes would look away, preferring to forget that for 80 years the minstrel show was the most important form of popular entertainment in America (and one that regularly drew TV audiences of 16 million here in the UK, until the BBC axed the *Black And White Minstrel Show* in 1978), and one that provided employment for black entertainers as well as white.

Tosches first wrote about Miller in his 1977 book, *Country*, and has returned to the theme at regular intervals, as and when his painstaking archival and library research turned up more information about the minstrel. But for all the work clearly expended, the pickings have been slim. The death of those who knew Miller and his essentially spectral quality (again and again we come across interviewees who can remember only the sketchiest details and names) are as

much to blame as the ephemeral nature of popular entertainment. Fortunately, Tosches is too wise a writer to try to hang a biography on scant branches, or to make his own often fruitless quest the central thread of the book. Instead, with Miller as a focal point, he has chosen to weave a dense web of meditations on the nature of American popular culture itself. Like Berthold's notion of Tokyo centring around the blank and unknowable void of the Imperial Palace, Miller's absence for much of the book is quite as significant as his presence. Recurring throughout the book, comets dashed into orbit around Miller's dark star, are crucial figures such as "The Singing Bremenman" Jimmie Rodgers, Hank Williams, Bob Dylan and William Faulkner. Traversing beyond these familiar names are a whole firmament of others: Samuel Beckett, Irving Berlin, Morton Feldman, Al Jolson, Headfloss, Bessie Smith, Bob Wills, the Dorsey Brothers, Robert Johnson, Lee Winona and *Her Sanguine Dancers*... Depression heaped upon depression, and from the sublime to the ridiculous, the sheer volume of names, songs and places referenced can get overwhelming. At times, it feels like the entire contents of 30 years' worth of cross-referenced file cards has been pulled out and dumped in your lap. More bewildering is Tosches's accomplishment, for all the byways lovingly and eruditely traversed, in coming up with a clutch of coherent ideas.

Among these is the truth that in popular music, as in everything else, there's nothing new under the sun — or as the Homeric translator Robert Fitzgerald put it, "one peat comes late and had supremely gifted predecessors". Tosches's interest is primarily in the eternal verities to be

found in words, and the delights in following the course of particular phrases or song situations through multiple versions, forward in time or back to ancient history. Through this methodology, he takes Smith's notion of the reconfiguration of black and white (and many others) muses one step further, and deftly demonstrates that any separation between "primitive" and "commercial" (or in today's terms the "real" and the "fake") is equally fallacious. Showtunes seep into the blues and hillbilly repertoire, mutating and inspiring new urban valences. The love of money is the principle determinant for musicians, and if the pose of "primitive" or "naive" is a selling point, well, it's as easily imitated as that of the smooth urban sophisticate. Thus, the return of authenticity and America's need for fantasy in its showbusiness is another important theme, and one which solidly enough punches PC tendencies. The folk boom and attendant blues revival is lambasted as the "demeaning ooze show of the celebration of the primitive... the grossest and most degrading of all minstrelsy". For Tosches, the exaggerated violence and put-on dangerousness of gangsters are no less stereotypes than the happy, smiling "coons" of the turn of the century — stereotypes the (white-owned) entertainment industry is happy to peddle in the name of commodified individuality and vast profit.

Criticism? As an occasional over-reliance on synchronicity, the odd facetious phrasing in Tosches's otherwise supremely elegant prose. But not much else. It's a forthright and thoughtful look into a world that few of us would dream of having any contemporary relevance. □

Ether Talk



Out on a LIMM: screenshots from the McCoys' public-access Live Internet Multi-user Mixer

As far back as 1970, the art historian Jack Burnham organized the exhibition *Software, Information Technology, Its New Meaning For Art* at New York's Jewish Museum, introducing computer algorithms into an art museum context. Much of the performance art, interactive art and conceptual art emerging at the time strove to reveal the internal logic of art, a process which Burnham likened to 'software', that set of rules that execute the principles behind functioning systems. The logics of these artistic pursuits continue in contemporary art today, especially since so many artists and musicians work explicitly with manipulative software.

As visual artists, New Yorkers Jennifer and Kevin McCoy appreciate the computer's ability to visualize sound and manipulate music and images. In contrast to many programs used by computer musicians and live video performers, they have placed their software on the Internet, to a space where observer and the observed are often confused and co-existent. Engaging with the multi-user characteristics of online culture, their software promises what few others do: a social life. Their Live Internet Multispace Mixer (LIMM), an experiment in the real-time generation of aesthetic moments, is a conceptual gesture: a collaborative music and image-making space that can be inhabited by any user who cares to log on. With a system in which multiple participants simultaneously add, manipulate and remove sound and image files, software becomes much more

than a tool or an instrument: it takes on properties of a living organism. Governed neither by a single authoritative performer nor by a generative algorithm, the look and sound of the interface resembles a Cagean 'silence': an empty context within which an infinite amount of agents can deposit their trace; a digital version of what Joseph Beuys would have called a social sculpture.

The McCoys have been working with digital sound and image for nearly ten years, having trained at Rensselaer's Integrated Electronic Arts Program (IEAR Studios). Among other multimedia installations and New Media art projects, they have authored several progressively more intricate systems for performing sound and video remixes, including *Curlycue*, *Whirlypig*, and now *LIMM*. *Curlycue* layers recorded and live audio samples and generates random loops that the user can then activate and dynamically manipulate in real time. The cues bits are sequenced, drawn out, split or otherwise mixed, and are played as accompaniments to video or used as a live remix tool during performances. In 1999, Kevin McCoy performed with *Curlycue* and *Pauline Oliveros* at *The Thing* in New York. In addition to Oliveros's music, sound was gathered from a real time connection with a group of performers in Buenos Aires, both supplying McCoy with rich data sources for his distorted loops. As a follow-up to *Curlycue*, *Whirlypig* was a program designed to translate the language of

the earlier software into video. Video feeds provide the raw material: they can select a sequence of stills and make it loop, flicker or play in random order. Layering and compositing allow for further possible imagery. A 'sliding' tool enables them to 'scratch' the video sequence and mirror movements and gestures made by a musician during a live performance.

LIMM is a hybrid software package combining audio and video, currently in development and designated for a winter release. In sharp contrast to the two previous projects, this new program will function only online. From a homepage, a visitor can choose to view the 'recorder' interface or the 'mixer' interface. The first is a plain browser window that acts as the display screen for the audio video performances recorded on the 'mixer' interface. Opening this second window lets the user enter the URL of their choice. This interface provides a framework for automatically turning a Web page into a list of its constituent source media files that can then be remixed and collaged, so it can be an alternative way of viewing the Internet itself. Each of the various sound and image files that exist on the chosen Website are isolated and listed on a cue sheet. The user can then select a sequence of files, manipulate or overlay them in ways similar to *Curlycue* and *Whirlypig*, and then broadcast them to the user's viewer window. The system supports most Web-based files (jpeg, gif, bmp, image files; Flash, mp3, and QuickTime movie files;

The interactive software of Jennifer and Kevin McCoy shows how it's possible to have an artistic social life online.

By Anthony Huberman

MP3 and wav sound files) and therefore turns the Internet (effectively, an infinite database) into an immense file source. Unlike Web radio or Web TV broadcasts, *LIMM* allows multiple users to work within the 'mixer' space simultaneously and can therefore host dynamic collaborations across the Internet with various performers altering the cue list with their selected files. The window also includes a 'chat' area where users can exchange suggestions and tips for further Websites and image and sound files to add to the mix. Work is underway to support recording and replacing the streams, and even using one mixer's output as a new source input for another mixer.

A visit to *LIMM* might reveal an ongoing composition in progress or a blank screen: the fluctuating flashes of networked projects reflect the social life of online activity. The application is easily activated once anyone assumes authorship and initiates a performance. Special guest performances could be scheduled and published, friends could arrange a time to log on. The element of chance, however, is omnipresent, as the platform remains stubbornly public and anonymous users could join a composition midway through. Placing these ideas into the public context of the Internet, the artists can emphasize the relevance of a socially constructed system of networks and can introduce software to the realities of social life. □ Jennifer and Kevin McCoy's work can be found at: www.mccoyspace.com

Go To:



It's been a busy few months over at online label *Filtit* (www.filtit.com). October is the last chance to siphon the whole of their whipping, limited edition 24x3" CD series *invalidObject* (reviewed in *The Wire* 211) from the ether, for free; with contributions from artists such as *Bleakheat*, *Pro*, *Akira*, *Robotica*, *Steve Roden*, *Scanner* and others, it's well worth the download time. While the files are settling onto your hard disk, take time out to look at *35 mm* (www.filtit.com/35mm), a touring exhibition of graphic art that is currently making its way around the world. Packed into a nifty box containing slides and projector, the chances are that images by graphic artists such as *Magoo's* *Tina Frank*, *123's* *Taylor Deupree* and *Feltier* (*Post* who also curated it) will soon be on display at a venue near you. No MP3s at the long awaited *Post everything*

(www.posteverything.com), but there's a great deal of Real Audio to suit your streaming needs. A 'community project' instigated by the folks behind UK labels *Leaf* and *Swim*, the site offers information on artists such as *Susumu Yokota*, *Marcia Siegel*, *PJ Harvey* collaborator *Ribz Elise*, vintage post-punkers *Wire* etc. As well as offering instant therapy, *Post everything* is a space to meet like-minded listeners on the message board, while a 'random play' button ensures a mystery selection of music while you're at it.

On the other side of the Atlantic, journalists are setting up their own private music writing homes. *The Osprey* (www.o-dub.com) is PhD student and music critic *Oliver S Wang's* collection of musings. Amongst the myriad of reviews written for various publications, you can check out Wang's own record collection and browse his O-

Dub Mixtape selection, all while listening to his radio broadcast *Aerial Bombings*. The late Portuguese poet, lover and futurist *Fernando Pessoa* inspired music journey *Marc Weidenbaum* to set up *Disquiet* (www.disquiet.com), another one-man zone offering plenty of writing. Here are interviews with the likes of *Bogdan Raczyński*, *Autecnic's* *Sean Booth*, *Posttek* and *Hrvatski* (accompanied by unedited transcripts), as well as label profiles, thinkpieces and a mailing list to keep you updated on the site's developments. The *Page-Spotter* section is an ongoing list of existing music books and to get some hands-on experience, the *Audio Games* section helpfully reviews sites by 'musicians and programmers who blur the line between musical composition and playful recreation'.

ANNE HILDE NESET

On Location

Live and kicking: festivals, concerts, clubs in the flesh



On Location

ARS ELECTRONICA LINZ VARIOUS VENUES

AUSTRIA

BY ANNE HILDE NESET

Now in its 14th year, the annual Ars Electronica – Europe's electronic art equivalent of the Oscars – was awarded at the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation's studio in Linz, Upper Austria. As TV shows go, it made for peculiar viewing. The music nominees this year, Oval, Bleepum From Blechdom and Ryöji Ikeda (see *The Wire* 206 for Tony Heppenstall's account of life as a Ars Electronica jury member), were introduced by short video presentations, while the TV hosts cracked trivial jokes to keep the audience from grabbing their remotes. How the work of such avatars got to be shown on what is essentially a television is anyone's guess, but, whatever, Ryöji Ikeda left \$10,000 richer clutching the Golden Nica prize, while Oval and Bleepum From Blechdom shared the second prize and collected \$5000 apiece. And Casper Nicolai picked up an award for the second year running, when the Polar installation he created in collaboration with Swarovski artist Marco Pethan cleaned up in the interactive Art category. (Last year he scored high with the 2002-2003 series of CDs released on his Basler-Noton label.)

The awards ceremony is only a part of the annual Ars Electronica festival, however. Ranging out from the Ars Electronica Centre, the installations, exhibitions, performances and workshops make up the week-long event occupying several venues in the centre of Linz, all of them in one way or another addressing this year's overarching theme: Takeover, with its brief to 'track the scenes, sites and protagonists of the art of tomorrow'. So where is 'electronic art' going? A panel debate following the awards ceremony, moderated by Autodesk's Hauke Humer, gave the three winners 3D minutes each to provide answers. Markus Popp expressed a general fatigue with the mess

of Clicks + Cuts churning on the market. He also

demonstrated his Ovalprocess, a Plexiglas

terminal housing his software, it's a flexible sound

engine that can be modified by its users. Ryöji

Ikeda's slot was filled by Touch supremo Jon

Wozencroft. Rather than talk about Ikeda's work,

he used it as a platform to express his own

despair at all this 'meaningless music out there'.

Making judging days at the likes of KoGEDE,

Wozencroft pointed his moist finger at the

audience and called for a serious debate about

the value of digital composition, and pined for a

music that dealt with life rather than its own

production methods. 'With every ten iBooks sold,

five new glitch artists and seven labels appear,'

he spat. 'Cheap technology produces too much

crap music. We are fucked by technology.' What

he made of West Coast laptop duo (and KoGEDE

affiliates) Bleepum From Blechdom went

unrecorded. Bleepum delivered an animated

restelling of their mythology involving characters

like the Sausus and a powdered Mallard,

illustrated by a slideshow and backed up with a

light-hearted software demo. In sharp contrast to

previous speakers, Kevin and Bevins' fishy

attitude brought a much-needed breath of fresh

air to the day.

Artist and composer Geran Levin inaugurated the music programme with the premiere of his commission, *Dial Tones*: A Telesiphony, for 200 programmed mobile telephones dispersed around the audience, which Levin conducted from the stage like an orchestra. The 20-minute performance was impressively choreographed and surprisingly musical, given that it was made up of the collective roar of milled Noises and Etchings. Exactly why someone would go the trouble of framing his 'new' sound, is mobile diatones, inside the 300 year old format of a traditional symphony was lost on me. This was conservatism resuscitating as innovation. More interesting events took place within the concert hall.

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five new glitch artists and seven labels appear,'

he spat. 'Cheap technology produces too much

crap music. We are fucked by technology.'

What he made of West Coast laptop duo (and KoGEDE

affiliates) Bleepum From Blechdom went

unrecorded. Bleepum delivered an animated

restelling of their mythology involving characters

like the Sausus and a powdered Mallard,

illustrated by a slideshow and backed up with a

light-hearted software demo. In sharp contrast to

previous speakers, Kevin and Bevins' fishy

attitude brought a much-needed breath of fresh

air to the day.

Artist and composer Geran Levin inaugurated

the music programme with the premiere of his

commission, *Dial Tones*: A Telesiphony, for

200 programmed mobile telephones

dispersed around the audience, which Levin

conducted from the stage like an orchestra.

The 20-minute performance was impressively

choreographed and surprisingly musical, given

that it was made up of the collective roar of

milled Noises and Etchings. Exactly why

someone would go the trouble of framing his

'new' sound, is mobile diatones, inside the 300

year old format of a traditional symphony was

lost on me. This was conservatism

resuscitating as innovation.

More interesting events took place within the concert hall.

Takeover, with its brief to 'track the scenes, sites

and protagonists of the art of tomorrow'. So

where is 'electronic art' going? A panel debate

following the awards ceremony, moderated by

Autodesk's Hauke Humer, gave the three winners

3D minutes each to provide answers. Markus

Popp expressed a general fatigue with the mess

of Clicks + Cuts churning on the market. He also

demonstrated his Ovalprocess, a Plexiglas

terminal housing his software, it's a flexible sound

engine that can be modified by its users. Ryöji

Ikeda's slot was filled by Touch supremo Jon

Wozencroft. Rather than talk about Ikeda's work,

he used it as a platform to express his own

despair at all this 'meaningless music out there'.

Making judging days at the likes of KoGEDE,

Wozencroft pointed his moist finger at the

audience and called for a serious debate about

the value of digital composition, and pined for a

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Clockwise from top left: Shihad's Steve Albini; Zeta Geva with Scott Kelly, Michael Gira of Beyond The Pale; Sinead Fionn Biechdon and Laseno at Ars Electronica





Atlantic Waves 2001

exploratory music from Portugal

Atlantic Waves 2001 is the first major festival dedicated to bringing contemporary Portuguese music to a British audience. It takes place in London throughout November 2001 and includes a total of eight dates, covering a wide range of musical styles. Most concerts will also feature guest appearances by British musicians.

Sat 3 Nov

Sun 4 Nov

Sat 10 Nov

Sun 11 Nov

Mon

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Palop Africa
featuring:
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Ocean 2 £10 adv
Improvised and experimental music in association with London Jazz Festival:
Telectu (Jorge Lima Barreto and Vitor Rua)
Eddie Prévost
Tom Chant
David Maranha
Chris Cutler

Purcell Room £15 adv
Jazz music in association with London Jazz Festival:
Maria João Mário Laginha
Toninho Ferragutti
Helge Norbakken
Carlos Barreto
Mário Delgado
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Ocean 2 £10 adv
Improvised and experimental music in association with London Jazz Festival:
Carlos Zingaro
Emídio Buchinho
Matt Wand
Mick Beck
Nuno Rebelo
Marco Franco
Kato Hideki
John Bisset

Mon 16 Nov 7.45pm
Queen Elizabeth Hall
£20 / £17.50
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Mísia

Sun 18 Nov 7pm
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part of **elektronica** at the Barbican 13-18.OCT.01

SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER 8PM

HYMNS

SOUND AND LIGHT PROJECTION
KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

SUNDAY 14 OCTOBER 5.30PM

SCENES FROM LIGHT

ENTRIES AND FORMULA, LUCIFER'S FURY,
WINGS OF THE NOSE DANCE, UPPER LIP DANCE,
SUKAT, MISSION AND ASCENSION
STOCKHAUSEN ENSEMBLE

SUNDAY 14 OCTOBER 8PM

ELECTRONIC STUDIES I & II

SONG OF THE YOUTHS

TELEMUSIC

KONTAKTE

SOUND AND LIGHT PROJECTION
KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

MONDAY 15 OCTOBER 8PM

FRIDAY FROM LIGHT

STOCKHAUSEN ENSEMBLE



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part of **elektronica** at the Barbican 13-18.OCT.01

SUNDAY 14 OCTOBER 8PM

THE PIT (seated capacity)

HURDY HURRY

(for Hurdy Gurdy)

A Y U L I V E

aka As Yet Untitled

(for Baritone Voice)

GUITAR TOO, FOR FOUR

(for Electric Guitar)

with live electric guitar quartet

Robert L Lee, Matt Rogalsky,

Jens Riner and Mark Webster

PAN FRIED 25

(for Bowed Piano)

Rare UK performance as part of the
elektronica Cinema Auralicular season

"This is amazingly profound and stirring
music which can't fail to get into your bones
immediately and affect you deeply" Ed Pianini



Portrait of Pepe Masing
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 October 6th GL solo, Tone, Teardrop Festival, NYC
 October 7th The Du-Tels (Gary and Peter Stampfli), Knitting Factory, NYC
 October 9th GL plays "The Sound of Sea" w/ Roy Stuart films, Gershwin Hotel, NYC
 October 12th GL solo, w/ Faust, Royal Festival Hall, London
 October 21st GL with Captain Beefheart project "Fast 'n Bulbous", Di Novo Musica Festival, Teatro Arcinto, Reggio Emilia Italy
 October 22nd GL w/ Fast 'n Bulbous, De Werf, Brugge Belgium
 October 23rd GL w/ Fast 'n Bulbous, Koko, Live on Radio Bremen
 October 26th GL plays "The Golem", Museum of the Moving Image, Astoria NY
 November 1st GL plays "Sounds of the Surreal", Prague Festival, Czech Republic
 November 2nd GL Chinese Pop Project "The Edge of Heaven", Mon Ami, Weimar Germany
 November 6th GL plays "The Golem", Mon Ami, Weimar Germany
 November 11th GL solo and "The Edge of Heaven", Le Reservoir, Paris
 November 26th GL solo acoustic, Leeuwarden Holland, Zakenkoff
 November 28th The Du-Tels, Live on BBC 3's "Ming the Shew", show, Ocean, London-European debut
 November 30th The Du-Tels, Paradiso, Amsterdam Holland

www.garylucas.com

Royal Festival Hall
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SUN 18 NOVEMBER
 QEH 7.45PM
RICHARD GALLIANO

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Accordionist Richard Galliano is recognised as the direct heir to Astor Piazzolla. His music is heart-stoppingly melodic, evocative of Tango, Jazz, Swing, French cafe' Westziles and Cabaret songs. Fresh, hauntingly atmospheric and inescapably absorbing. Tonight he is reunited with virtuoso clarinettist Michel Portal and the New York Quintet.

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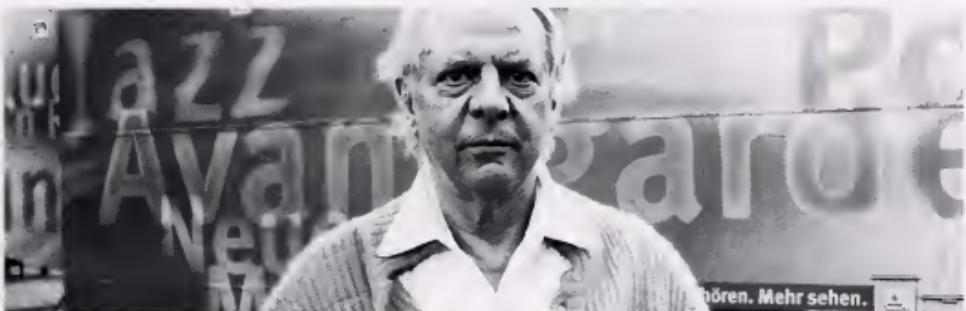
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Out There

This month's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts.

Send info to listings@thewire.co.uk

Deadline for November issue: Friday 12 October



Electronic high priest: Stockhausen at London Barbican

UK Festivals

BELFAST 39TH FESTIVAL

BELFAST
Jazz and Improv related events at this city festival include the 20-piece Jazz Jamaica Allstars (27 October), Dave Douglas's *Witness* project featuring Iouie Mori (3 November), local improvisation group When Heads Collide (8) and Fred Hersch's 4 In Perspective with Kenny Wheeler and Norma Winstone. Various venues, times and prices, 028 90 667 687, www.belfastfestival.com

THE CUTTING EDGE: TOPOLOGIES

LONDON
Series of contemporary music concerts promoted by the British Music Information Centre, including works by and dedicated to James Dillon (4 October), Ventris, piano music by Harrison Birtwistle and others (11), guitarist Tim Brady plays works by himself and Jenny Peyton Jones, and The Smith Quartet plays works by Tim Souster, Gavin Bryars and Howard Skempton (18); Toris Chen plays piano works by Cornelius Cardew and Michael Parsons (25, 8pm); and Apartment House play works by Laurence Crabb and James Clarke (25, 7.30pm). The series continues in November. London the Warehouse, 020 7499 8567, www.bmic.co.uk

ELECTRONIC

LONDON
Co-sponsored by The Wire and Radio 3, this major Barbican festival offers a rare opportunity to hear some of Karlheinz Stockhausen's greatest electronic works in performances that will be directed by the composer himself and feature his own ensemble. The concert programme breaks down thus: *Rhythmen* (13 October), Seven Scores From Light (14, 5.30pm), *Electroacoustic Studies 1 & 2*, *Song Of The Mouth*, *Reiemusik* and *Kontakte* (14, 8pm) and *Friday From Light* (15). In addition to

conducting, Stockhausen will be in attendance each night to give pre-concert talks. The festival has an extensive 'supporting' programme that includes DJ Prechtel G Jems like *Apteks Twit* playing an Ambient DJ set in the Barbican's tropical conservatory (14); a night hosted by the Twit's Reptiles label featuring Bogdan Raczyński, Robert Normandeau and Prime Baster (15); Telvin Singh duetting with Jon Hassell, and London Sinfonietta playing new works by Masse Attack's arranger Craig Armstrong (16); and Wilans Orff playing new work through Stockhausen's sound source system (18). There is also a related strand of short films with electronic soundtracks curated by Philip Mark Webber, which will feature a live soundtrack performance by Phil Niblock (14), a sound installation by ex-CNN keyboard player Irmtraud Schmid and Kumo, a live concert hosted by the SPMN, education projects and talks. London Barbican, 13-18 October; times/price vary, 020 7638 8881, www.barcapac.org.uk

EXTRASENSORY

LONDON
Multimedia arts collective launches its first exhibition and international concert series. The concert use electronics to explore sound and space and feature CM Van Hauswolff and Paul Spreckley (11 October), Francesco Lopez and Immediata (12), *Fantazsgymnastika*, Dove Carter & Joe Watson and Blasibelly (13). Meanwhile, eight installations explore the full space of the festival venue, a converted neo-Gothic church. London 291 Gallery, 11-17 October, 020 7613 5676, www.electrason.org

FOURTH FRAKTURE FESTIVAL OF IMPROVISED MUSIC

LIVERPOOL
Self-explaining event featuring Naught (3 October), May McTee & Phil Motos (4), Lol Creme & Michael Kosmedes (5), Ian Berry/John Butcher (6), Elektrohod featuring Neil Campbell and friends (9), Keith Tippett (11),

Hession/Wilkinson/Foil (12) and John Bessell/Rhodri Davies/Phil Motos (13). Liverpool Bluecoat Arts Centre and Jump Ship Rat, festival pass £20/£17, 0151 280 9828, www.frauke-koerner.co.uk

MINO YOUR HEAD

LONDON
Four nights of psychedelia and acid flashbacks on the South Bank courtesy of The On, Gong and Acid Mothers Temple (3 October), Hawkwind and Acid N To (4) (10), Faust and Gary Lucas (12). The Pretty Things play SF Sorrow with guest narrator Arthur Brown, and Robyn Hitchcock and The Soft Boys play Underwater Moonlight (19). London Royal Festival Hall, 020 7960 4242, www.rfh.org.uk

OXI

OXFORD
This self-styled Festival of Vibrations and Oscillations provides a platform for emerging and established artists who work outside of conventional art practices. The event includes performances, installations, sound art, screenings, site specific work and symposia. Artists include Kaiti Mathews, Simon Fisher-Turner & Scanner, Brian Cating, Bruce Gilden & Jonny Brereton, David Toop, Aneesh Shaligram and many others. 25-27 October, festival pass £40/£20, day passes £15/£10, 01865 484957, www.oxford-artsculture.com

International Festivals

ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES USA

The UK festival relocates to Los Angeles, this time curated by Sonic Youth. Highlights include Television, Derek Bailey, Fred Anderson live, spoken word by Lydia Lunch and others (19 October), Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Boedoms, Tony Conrad, Dead C, Cecil Taylor, Boz Burrell, and more. 22-24 October, 00 35 265 5522, jaquimlent.org

Luc Ferrari with DJ Olive, Iuei Non with Kim Gordon and Jim O'Rourke, Papa M, Mats Gustafsson, William Winant, Thurston Moore, Rita and Fenris (20); Sonic Youth, Stereolab, La Tigre, Peaches and Caribou Qs, Los Angeles UCLA, 001 310 825 2301, www.royalred.com/arp/

STOP/SPOT FESTIVAL

AUSTRIA
Hard-edged electronic event featuring Techno Animal, Stilusseptet, Amb-Pop Consortium, Andreas Tilliander, Recherchezentrum, Goen, Porter Ricks and others. 26-27 October, Linz OK-Center for Gegenwartskunst, www.ok-center.at

ELECTROGRAPH 91

GREECE
The first edition of this sound art festival is being staged in an underground railway tunnel and features Genesis Melegi, Thomas Koerner, Hecker, Ilios, Francisco López as well as 11. Felix Kubin as well as screenings of works by experimental British directors. Athens tunnel between Syntagma station and Monastiraki station inside the new Metro line, 18-20 October, www.electrograph.gr

ELEKTRONIKALORIA

SPAIN
Annual electronic music festival in San Sebastián on the Iberian north coast. Artists include Jak Leinenkugel and Bunt Freedmen, Janet Shapler, Pol, Markus Nikola and Olaf Dierichs, Kirk Degregori, Recherchezentrum Dub Wavies and more. Donostia San Sebastián, 5-7 October, various venues, www.elektronikalia.org

ENCONTROS DA MUSICA

PORTUGAL
Improvisation and composition mix freely at the second edition of this Atlantic event. Featured artists include Kaiti Mathews, Carlos Zingaro, Carlos Santos, Albrecht Lopcs and many others. Seteais instat, 22-24 October, 00 35 265 5522, jaquimlent.org



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Tue 6 LONDON Union Chapel
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Wed 7 BIRMINGHAM St Alban's Highgate
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Out There

AMM's Keith Rowe

FCMM

CANADA
Major North American film festival with an excellent music programme part-curated by The Wire. The magazine's Underground Pessôa night features Kid606, Ani-Pop Consortium, Jetone and The Wire Sound System (13-October). Other performance highlights in a packed bill include a DJ set by The Wire contributor Philip Sheppard (12), a performance of The User's Secret Symphony For Der Mattn Printers (13), a touch evening with Christian Fennessy, Phil Niblock, Hazard and Jon Wozencraft (18), a collaborative work by Bob Ostertag and live animation artist Pierre Hebert (19), and a closing night concert with Twerk, Safety Sciences, Sutekh and Sessi (20). Montreal various venues, 12-20 October, www.fcmm.com

GÖTEBORG ART SOUNDS

SWEDEN
Genuinely eclectic New Music festival includes performances by Ian Dun with The Göteborg Symphony Orchestra, Mats Gustafsson, Joey Baron, Supersilent, Apartment House, André Quartet, Self music from Istanbul and Paris, Carsten Nicolai, Ryoko Hebe, Tetsuo Furukawa & Zbigniew Karkowski, To Rococo Rot, Granular Synthesis, Allos Rosemen, Kevin Churruca, Lief Ellegaard, London Sinfonetta and Göteborg's Militant Jazz Musicians. There is also an exhibition by CM Von Hausswolff, a lecture by David Toop and various sound art performances out on the streets. Göteborg, various venues, 6-13 October, www.gas-festival.com



LEM

SPAIN

The fifth edition of the International Experimental Music Festival features Carl Stone, Rave Saxophone Quartet, Oskono, Derek Bailey & Hisao Honkawa and many others. Gracia-Barcelona, 00 34 932 373737, www.graciabarc.com

MEREDITH MONK

IRELAND

A series of events celebrating the works of the enigmatic vocal artist and composer, including two day-long workshops, a solo vocal performance, and a screening of her films. Dublin Irish Modern Dance Theatre, 27-31 October, 00 353 1 874 9616, www.rhmdt.ie/meredithmonk.com

NO MUSIC FESTIVAL

USA

The Nikkei Spain Band's logic-busting noise festival comes to New York. The extensive line-up includes Boredom, Incapacitants, Shaking Ray Lewis, Christian Marclay, Thurston Moore, And Lindsay, CMC, Reynolds, Hyakudan with Kim Gordon and more. New York Tonic, 11-14 October, 001 212 249 8950 x463, www.tonic107.com

OUND FIELD

USA

Gene Coleman curated this festival of new and experimental music. This year's featured composers are Luc Ferrari (1-7 October), Salvatore Sciarrino (8-13), Jennifer Walshe and Jaka Miler (16), Steffen Schlemmer (17-23), Rainer Heinziger and Gene Coleman (28), Burkhard Stang and Werner Dafeldecker (30)

and an architectural/sound installation by Sempach with music by Kevin Drumm. Groups and special guests include Ensemble Naamenssia, David Grubbs, Martin Terešák, Ian Pace, Tom Kapsalis, Vincent Royer, Pos-Neg, Paolo Alivres, sfog, Amy Williams, Michael Maser, Julia Bentley and others. Chicago various venues, times and prices, 001 773 973 2501

Special Events

AMM WEEKEND

IRELAND

A two-day event dedicated to the legendary noise improvisation trio. On the Friday afternoon John Tilbury gives a lecture on contemporary piano work while Eddie Prevost gives a limited capacity improvisation workshop; in the evening there is a performance by the workshop group as well as a solo set by guitarist Keith Rowe (26 October). On the Saturday John Tilbury plays an afternoon concert of work by Morton Feldman and Cornelius Cardew, and AMM and the event with an evening concert (27). Dublin Project, various times and prices, 00 353 1 679 6622, www.whisperinggaller.com

ANGELS OF THE UNIVERSE

The Fredrik Thor Hednessson film soundtracked by Hilmar Órn Hilmarsson and Sigur Rós tours, alongside screenings of two Sigur Rós videos. Brighton Duke of York (1 October), Oxford Phoenix Picture House (2), Bristol Watershed (3), Cardiff Chapter (4), Manchester Concourse (6), Birmingham MAC (10), London Horns Hospital (11), Nottingham Broadway (12).

Sheffield Showroom (13), Edinburgh Filmhouse (15), Glasgow Film House (16)

BANG ON A CAN MARATHON

USA

Eight hours of music by over 100 performers from 11 countries put together by the New York New Music crew. Bang On A Can All-Stars. Highlights include Ivo Pogosyan's ecstatic Bulgarian wedding band, Newband performing works on Harry Partch's original instruments, Arnold Baxtay's Orchestra Of Extended Strings' otherworldly Just Intonation works, plus musicians from China, Africa and Burma. New York Brooklyn Academy of Music, 28 October, 2-10pm, 001 212 206 1450

BROKEN MUSIC + ULTRA

UK

Two music and film events. Broken Music is a collection of videos focusing on the music of some of the world's most innovative artists. Sven Väth, Christian Mändz, Voicé Crack, Stina Vesikka and Barry Schwartz (3 October). Ultra are the Czech film-action-performance group whose multi-screened and fragmented films are augmented with live improvised music (6). London La Caisse, 020 7694 0201

CCA

UK

To celebrate the redevelopment of Glasgow's dedicated arts venue, Diananda Galas, Hibert Henck, John Tilbury, Marc Cozzi and Ian Pace will be playing live, plus there will be a series of 'Sound Commissions' by Evan Parker, Sneaker Pimp, Tim Brady and London's Sprawl club. Glasgow CCA, 25 October, 0141 352 4900. www.cca-glasgow.com

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- 4th Before Touch
- 5th Lol Coxhill/Michael Kosmidis
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Mais Gustafsson Stockholm

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A SONIC TRIP ON THE SOUTH BANK

THE ORB & GONG

Special Guests ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE

Wed 3 Oct RFH 7pm

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Wed 10 Oct RFH 8pm

FAUST

Special Guest GARY LUCAS

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Live performances Diamo Yoshihata (JPN) - Seichiko M (JPN) - Toshiharu Nakamura (JPN) - Filament (JPN) - Farmers Manual (AUT) - Russ (JPN) - The User (CAN) - Connac (UK) - 20A (RUS) - Alexei Danziger (RUS) - Circle (FIN) - Dj' Bassista & Kan Aronpong (FIN) - Pekka Arakasen & Es (FIN) - Keshket (FIN) - Shogen Kurokita (FIN) - The Wire Sound System (UK) - Distorsione's Mark & Anjaape (UK/FRA) - Ircs (GB) - DJ masters.Linfors (FIN) - DJ pilens (FIN) - more

Moving image Martin Arnold (AUT) - Craig Baldwin (USA) - Ian Hellwell (UK) - Kristian Petri/Jan Riedl/Johan Soderberg (SWE) - Gustav Deutsch (AUT) - Tony Conrad (USA) - Paul Kaiser (USA) - Jacek Rekiewicz (PL) - Semiconvector (UK) - Peter Kubelka (AUT) - Robert Riner (USA) - Malcolm Le Grice (UK) - Lu Rhodes (UK) - Shirley Clarke (USA) - Jan Haugera (FIN) - Pekka Sassi (FIN) - more



JAH WOBBLE

LOL COXHILL & FRIENDS

UK

The stars of the improvising community turn out to celebrate the launch of a double CD retrospective of the music of Lol Coxhill. Coxhill will appear in various groupings throughout the evening. London Old Rose, 31 October, 8pm, £15/£4, 020 7263 7265

CRASS AUCTION

UK

Auction to raise money for the Crass commune. Old House. Rare material by Crass, Gee Vaucher, David Tibet, Tortoise, Re/Search and Joe Dilworth will be going under the hammer. London House Hospital, the exhibition of works runs 17-27 October, midday-5pm, with a launch party (17) and final bid party (27)

DANIEL JOHNSTON IN KING KONG

UK

Daniel Johnston features in a new video by Berlin based artist Peter Friedl. London Chisenhale Gallery, 3 October-4 November, £20, 020 4518, www.chisenhale.org.uk

ARNOLDO DREYBLATT

USA

The US minimalist composer presents a multimedia installation, *The Re-Collection*. Measured, based on biographies from Who's Who In Central & Eastern Europe 1933. New York Jewish Museum, to 19 January 2002, 001 212 423 3200, www.dreyblatt.net

FREE FALL

UK

Launch party for Resistance FM & Peter Cusack's *Your Favvourite London Sound*, a collection of atmospheric location recordings, in the company of various local musicians, VIPs and psychogeographic sideliners by *Wire* contributor David Mand. London Conway Hall, 12 October, 7pm, £ee, mifmif@btconnect.com

MIXMASTERS.TV

UK

ITV1 and Addictive TV have commissioned a series of 13 30 minute QI/UV mixes for late night television. Visual artists include O-Face, Light Surgeons and Hestoric and musical mixes come from the Park, Replex, Hospital, Botch & Scupper and Hydrogen Dukedom labels. ITV, weekly from 28th September, screens 2.30am

CARSTEN NICOLAI

LONDON

Sound and visual installations by Raster-Noton boss and the man behind Mille Plateaux artist Alva Noto at this London white cube gallery. £10, to 26 October, Thursdays-Sunday 1-6pm

free, 0207 736 7334, mail@raster.co.uk. It concludes with Nona's first UK solo performance (26 October, £10, tickets from Rough Trade, 020 7240 0103)

RADICAL FASHION

UK

Novel installations by leading fashion designers including Alexander McQueen, Issey Miyake, Paul Yamaamoto, Comme Des Garçons, Jean Paul Gaultier, Vivienne Westwood, Helmut Lang and more, with sound accompaniments curated by The Wire's David Toop. Contributing musicians include Björk, Ryuchi Sakamoto, Paul Schütze, Ken Cascone, Ken Heda, Akira Irieles, Christophe Charles, Max Eastley, Oliver Alary, Yoshitomo Kamei, Yutaka Watanabe and Toop himself. London V&A Museum, 18 October-6 January 2002, £5, 020 7942 2000.

www.vam.ac.uk

THE WIRE SESSIONS LIVE: VANDERMARK 5

Kicking off the second series of concerts on London's South Bank, hosted by this magazine, is what promises to be an incendiary performance by the high-energy Chicago jazz come led by saxophonist Ken Vandermark. London Purcell Room, 22 October, 8pm, £12.50/£10.00, 020 7960 4242. In addition to the London date, Vandermark 5 also play Leeds Wardrobe (17 October), Gonesheds Caerphilly Hall (18), Birmingham MAC (20)

On Stage**ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE & THE MELTING PARADISO UFO + CIRCLE**

Wayward Japanese psychedelic rockers return for a major tour supported by British drone merchants Dofotu The Port (4 October), Leeds Brudenell Club (5), Newcastle Upon Tyne Colosseum Arms (6), Edinburgh The Venue (7), Glasgow 13th Note (8), Manchester Band On The Wall (10), Nottingham The Social (11), Wolverhampton The Varsity (12), Brighton Concorde 2 (13), London Spitz (16). In addition, AMT guitar hero Makoto Kawabata performs three extra dates with his Nishinomoto trio at Manchester Star & Garter (9), Birmingham Jug Of Ale (13), and London Upstairs at the Garage (14)

LAURIE ANDERSON

Conceptual artist, violinist and wordsmith performs work from her new album *Life On A String*. Coventry Warwick Arts Centre (2 October), Bristol Colston Hall (3), London Royal Festival Hall (5)

JELLO BIAFRA

Special word performance from the former Dead Kennedy's frontman. London Astoria, 4 October, £8, 020 7434 8992

FAUST

Original Krautrockers on tour. Milton Keynes Wughtton Centre (5 October), Brighton Concorde II (7), Newcastle Open House (8), Edinburgh Liquid Rooms (9), Leeds Isla Cantis (10), Coventry Warwick Arts Centre (11), London Royal Festival Hall (12)

RICHIE HAWTIN

Plastic party person. Birmingham Atomic Jam (13 October), Leed's Orbit (also 13), Dublin Ambassador Theatre (20), Birmingham Custard Factory (30)

ELVIN JONES'S BIG BANG

Ex-Catrine drummer. London Barbican, 8 October, 7:30pm, £20/£10, 020 7638 8891

FUTURE PILOT AKA

Sushi Doctor's curious experimental pop project. London 93 Feet East, 16 October, 020 7247 3293

DI MORPHEUS

Freelone label founder tours in support of his new compilation, London O2 Bar (27 October, with Mammastom Morris), album launch party at London The Trower's (28) and London Heretic (2 November, with Pete Herbert & Joas Butterfield)

NEIL LANDSTRUM

Broadly-based theater label Techne head tours. Edinburgh venue 1 (5 October), London Elektricity (10), Bristol Future Funk (27), Leeds Orbit (17), Birmingham House of God (23)

LYDIA LUNCH + SHOCK HEADED PETERS

Lunch's spoken vitriol is accompanied by Terry Edwards and supported by Karl Blaier's Gothic songs. London 93 Feet East, 8 October, 7:30-11pm, £7.50, 020 7247 3293

NINJA TUNE PRESENTS...

See sights of Steel Steel featuring DJ Food & DK, Bonobo, Ollie Tedia and Juan McLean. Newcastle University (17 October), Manchester Planet X (18), Glasgow Am School (19), Cardiff University (20), London Cargo (25), Leeds Warehouse (26)

MUTTERS WITH ATTITUDE

Launch event for the Mad Padre CD of the same name. To quell him if manifested, Mad Prive seeks to "celebrate madness in all its forms as a means to all-out social revolution". Performers include Alternative TV, Ceramic Hots and Shiny Wiltonaires. London The Garage, 1 October, £5

entrance includes free copy of the CD, 020 7607 1818

ONENESS OF JUJU

Rare UK dates from James "Plunk" Branch and his tribe of African Rhythmatists. Brighton Corn Exchange (25 October), London Jazz Cafe (26), Leeds Waddey (27)

KIMMO POHJONEN

Finnish accordionist returns with a new project, Kuster London Blackheath Concert Halls, 26 October

RADIO TARIFA

Seville Spanish group explore their Arabic, Jewish, Moorish and Afro influences. London Barbican, 24 October, 8.30pm, 020 7636 8891, www.bnbcms.org.uk

SOLEX

Elisabeth Esselink and her merry band, London 93 Feet East, 2 October, 020 7247 3293

STRINGS WITH EVAN PARKER

The improvising saxophonist colludes performs with an ad hoc orchestra of caged string players. London St Michael & All Angels Church, 11 October, 8pm, £8/£5, 020 6346 8995

TRANS AM + THE FUCKING CHAMPS

US post-rockers tour with Metalic instrumentalists. Brighton Vots Club (14 October), Southampton (15), Newport (16), Birmingham The Flapper & Fink (17), Liverpool (18), Dublin Whelans (19), Cork The Loby (20), Limerick (21), Belfast (22), Glasgow 13th Note Club (23), Dundee On Air East (24), Edinburgh Wet Red Bar (25) Leeds The Brundell (26), Nottingham The Boot Club (27), Exeter (28), London 93 Feet East (29)

VAN BEBBER/HELMUT LEMKE

Raw improvisation duo tour York The Black Swan (2 October), Sheffield The Grapes (3), Salford Chapel Street Open Festival (5-7), Cardiff Chapter Arts Centre (8)

JAH WOBBLE'S SOLARIS

Former PL bassman takes to the road on a Contemporary Music Network tour sponsored by The Wire with a new group featuring Masud Budd, Jake Lebezot, Bill Lawless and comet player Graham Haynes. London Ocean (21 October), Glasgow The Arches (22), Manchester Contact Theatre (23), Leeds The Wardrobe (24), Kendal Brewery Arts Centre (25), Brighton Dome (27), Coventry Warwick Arts Centre (28)

www.mntours.org.uk

Club Spaces**ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL**

Monthly electronics night. This month Future

Out There

Sound Of London enter the booth for a one off DJ set London Embassy Bar, 19 October, Bpm-1am, £3

BAGGAGE RECLAIM

Dense droves from DJ sets, vocals and toys from UK's Anna Horner, audio visual project from Motherlode, Improv from Celsite Z, cracked songs from A Girl Called Gem, and songs with a beatbox from MC Richard Senkeren. London 12 Bar Club, 28 October, Bpm, £6, 020 7916 6969

CARE IN THE COMMUNITY

Multi media club night with a strong visual identity and a wide and discerning music policy. London Herbel, 9 & 23 October, 7.30pm-2am, free, 020 7613 4462

CONSUME

American vocalist and toy player Anna Henner in duet with DJ Richard Sanderson plus Hassle Hound, Glasgow 13th Note Cafe, 8.30-midnight, 26 October, £4, D141 553 1638, www.consume-liverpool.co.uk

EATOMSK

The Sonic Catering Band cook up – literally – a live soundtrack to Marco Ferreri's rarely seen scandalous 70s classic, Le Grande Raffica. London Tyneside Studios, 21 October, 6pm-midnight, £7, £5, 020 7613 3001

HUSTLIN'

Hip hop night with resident DJ Danny Delta, DJ Cyrus and Pete Naphurk, who'll also be Vjing, plus guests. London Madam Jolks, last Thursday of every month, 10pm-3am, £3/£5, 07895 783666, www.madamajolks.com

INSTANT MUSIC MEETING

"Electro/experimental sound/song series" at two venues Voltage and Noise Flamenco (5 October), Stereo/Guerra/Mattin/Hood, "Music Group Musa" collective and Les 7 Mondes (12), Lab and Kelcey Michael (19), Miso Soup, Toshiyuki Masaki and Kev Hopper (26), London Centurion, 8.30-11pm, £4/£3, Plus Sean O'Hagan, Anna Henner/Steve Bensford/Richard

Sanderson Trio, Shaggy Wado, Bit Tonic and guests. London Hoxton Wall, 20 October, Bpm, £6/£4, info@puffinwind.moon.co.uk

KAKUTOPIA

On the wall Improv. Helmut Lemke and Klaus Von Besser, Pleasure-Drenching Improvers and Gwily Edesender (2 October) and us!, aka Gwily Edesender/Richard Bowes/Ian Norton (19). York Black Swan, Bpm, £3/£2, www.kakutopia.com

KLINKER

Packed sets of improvised music, poetry and performance. Eroto Da-Esc, Laboratorio, The Particles (4 October), Gabriel Keene Trio, Jan Bielek & Laura Kavangh, DT/Batman and Druff (11), They Came From The Sea, Poirot, Peter Beverley & Keith Bayly (18), Yu Basta, Paolo Angeli, Ben The Wendy (26), El Sid and Ian Heschl (27). London The Sussex, 020 8806 8216, www.theklinker.treasurus.co.uk

KOSMISCHE

Krautrock and more at a club which recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. Three events this month: Capitol K live plus DJs (London Upstair at the Garage, 29 September, £5, 020 7607 1818); Nishimori + Circle (14 October, 7.30pm, £8); and Koen & Koen Congo Powers plus DJs (London 93 Feet East, 28, 8pm-2am, £7, 020 7247 3295). Web: www.kosmische.org

PEDESTRIAN

Orchestral electronics and more. Manhatta live plus Minotaur Shock & Jamie Hornblow two DJ set. Bristol Arc Bar, 7 October, 7pm-1am, £1, www.pedestrian.org

PIPE & PASTRY

Boatman Brothers' haunt for improvised and leftfield music. The Motley Sickness Majorette Show, Dave Fowler/Janey Doyle/Susie Honeyman/Gill Walsh and We're Breaking Up (8 October), Steve Noble & Alan Wilkinson, Echo City (22), Transmissions Of Not, Ian Smith/Dave Tucker/Simon H Fell (28). London Brixtonton Centre, Mondays, Bpm, £4/£3, D1932 571323

SONIC MOOK EXPERIMENT

Sam McLeskey's electroacoustic London club night hits the road with a gaggle of star guests in New York, 93 Feet East (29 September), Nottingham Social (9 October), Cardiff Toucan (25), Glasgow CCA (26), London ICA (26)

SOUND 323

Afternoon Improv inside this North London record shop. Sylvia Hallett (6 October), Simon Vincent & Graham Halliwell (13), and Anthony Braxton associate Scott Rosenberg (20). London Sound 323, Saturdays, 3pm, £3, D2D 8348 9595

THE SPRAWL

Electroacoustic sounds in an Internet cafe. Audio-visual glitch improv from Ticklish plus resident DJs Bit Tonic and Si-icu!ds, plus visuals by Waveform, London Global Cafe, 4 October, 7.30pm-11pm, £4/£3, 0207 287 2242, www.duse.com/sprawl/

X CHROMOSOMES

Women in electronics event presented by the Law & Auler label. London 93 Feet East, 2, 16 & 30 October, 8-11pm, free, D2D 7247 3293, www.93feeteast.co.uk

Incoming

ATLANTIC WAVES

LONDON
Dive-off London festival spread across eight nights and devoted to showcasing the current state of new and experimental Portuguese music. Portuguese performers include Rodrigo Leão, Mista, Palop Africa, Telecor and Carlos Zingaro, the latter two appearing in collaboration with Eddie Prevost and Tom Chant and Matt Ward and Mick Beck respectively. London various venues, 2-29 November, www.atlanticwaves.org

AVANTO

FINLAND
Helsink's Media Art Festival this year has a

Japanese bias with performers including Otomo Yoshihide, Rains, Sachiko M, Toshimaru Nakamura and Filament alongside Farmers Manual, ZMA, The User, Optic B, Baxters, Ken Amons and others. A full programme of films includes work by Tony Conrad, Craig Baldwin, Makoto Le Grec and Jack Smith. Helsinki, 6-11 November. www.avanto2010.com

WHERE OPPOSITES ATTRACT

UK
The first of what promises to be an annual festival in which the audience chooses improvising groups from a pool of performers. The inaugural event includes Caroline Knobel, Richard Thomas, The Bohemian Brothers, reSorange, Paul Head, London Toy Orchestra, Hugh Metcalf, Yumi Hara, Vir Cowringham and many others. London Shepherd's Bush Village Hall, 3 November, midday-7pm

TAMPERE JAZZ HAPPENING

FINLAND
Three days of high-end jazz and Improv including Roy Campbell, Sam Rivers, Herbie Hancock Quartet, The Necks, Milton Graves, Barry Guy New Orchestra, John Lindberg Ensemble and more. Tampere Old Customs Hall and Club, 2-4 November, www.tampere.fi/jazz

Out There Items for inclusion in the November Issue should reach us by Friday 12 October
Fix +44 (0)20 7436 5769 listing@btwre.co.uk
Do not send email listings as attachments: they will be treated as
listings information should include a contact phone number, start time and ticket price. Listings cannot be taken over the phone. □

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National

BBC RADIO 1 9.00-9.00 FM

JOHN PEEL
Tuesday-Thursday 10pm-midnight
The radio nation's bible

GILLES PETERSON
Wednesday 9.30pm-2am Post-Acid jazz

FABIO & GROOVERIDER
Friday 2-4am Vangard drum 'n' bass

WESTWOOD RAP SHOW

Friday 11pm-2am/Saturday 9pm-midnight
Hip hop focus

REGGAE DANCEHALL NITE
Saturday midnight-2am Ilass culture

BBC RADIO 3 9.00-9.00 FM

LATE JUNCTION
Monday-Friday 10.15-midnight
New Music complement

JAZZ LEGENDS
Friday 4pm-6pm Acoustic recordings

ANDY KERSHAW

Friday 10.30-11.30pm World Music
Blind Boys Of Alabama (12 October)

JAZZ ON 3

Friday 11.30pm-1am
Modern jazz in session and concert.
This month: Stern Picard Trio (5 October),
Wallace Roney (12), Andrew Cyrille,
Reggie Workman, Oliver Lake (19)

WORLD ROUTES

Saturday 1-2pm

Lucy Owen presents a programme of global music.
This month's special: Lekhoni/ Shenvir (13 October), Navratri Festival with Praful Dave (27)

JAZZ FILE

Saturday 5-6.30pm
Ian Carr's documentary on Miles Davis continues

HEAR AND NOW

Saturday 11.15pm-Lam New Music magazine

MIXING IT

Sunday 11pm-midnight

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PMS

Sunday midnight-2am Eclectic mix of event sounds

BBC SCOTLAND 92.4-94.7 FM

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Wednesday 7-10pm, Sunday 10pm-1am
Jazz and nu-beats

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KISS 100 FM (LONDON)

PATRICK FORGE

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4 HERO

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IDEAL has its roots in the Swedish punk/noise underground. Since Svennson has worked with Bööft Records (1988-94) and we have both been active booking shows and tours for years, and we are both involved (and have been) in loads of artists and projects. IDEAL was established 1998 as the result for a common interest in releasing contemporary, new experimental music under influence of DIY ethics.

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IDEAL Recordings wants to find new (mainly Swedish) composers and groups within the fields

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Epiphanies

Clive Bell remembers the day he nearly joined Henry Cow



Legends in their own lifetimes: Henry Cow in 1974

it was a different world back then. It seems to me there was less of everything. Certainly less music. And what music there was came out of small radios. And the enormous piano at the corner of the living room. To me, sitting underneath it as a child, the piano seemed vast, but in fact it was between a grand and a baby grand, a size termed a Boudoir, and I've never seen one since.

I grew up playing the flute in a remote Sussex village, in a house without any electricity. By day I tended a small herd of goats on the hillside, and improvised on the piccolo while ambling through fields of barley. OK, I made up the goats, but my point is that my exposure to either live or recorded music was immobile until I arrived at college, in Cambridge, 1969. Here I was knocked sideways by an epiphany of series of concerts and encounters. Jethro Tull – the showmanship and sheer volume, the knowing humour and musicianship, something like Ian Dury's Blockheads ten years later. Pink Floyd – Syd Barrett had just left, and they spun a sonic maelstrom round our heads, threatening to suck us all in. Kartheinz Stockhausen came to town and lectured about something similar. And The Incredible String Band played again and again, shambling across the stage between 50 unnameable instruments, taking an age between numbers because someone had to tune the zither played by Licorice – was she the one that later became Mayor of Taunton? But we always forgave The String Band everything, because their music was subtle and whimsical, and because they embodied so many alternatives, so many rejections of things that had seemed important before. For example, that you must impress the audience with technical expertise (jazz), and you must play aggressive and loud (rock). These genre conventions were OK up to a point, and we all enjoyed a visit from Detroit's MC5 – like the self-flagellating initiates of an exhausting cult, they pounded out rock's underlying mystery till we were almost too numb to applaud. But the best groups defied these conventions, rewrote the rules, and were of course derided by many disapproving music fans. Notorious among Cambridge's homegrown groups was Henry Cow. Tim Hodgkinson (sax and organ) and Fred

Frith (guitar) had formed a six piece Dada blues group the year before, but by the time I saw them, the blues standards had moved to the encore list, and Henry Cow were a trio playing their own complex chamber rock compositions. John Greaves, a bass player with a fondness for the upper reaches of the instrument had joined; he also liked to sing the odd Frank Sinatra tribute. The group's reputation preceded them, in the sense that they annoyed the hell out of several people I knew. It was rock music of a sort, but there was no drummer, and they played sitting down. An exciting riff would appear, only to be dismissed after four bars in favour of a Webernian atomic melody in 13/8 time. No proper guitar solos, but melodies on the bass and abrasive improvising on sax. Instead of liquid slides and strobe lights, a tasseled standard lamp on stage. And a man ironing his clothes throughout the set.

I think the combination of playful and serious attracted me straight away. This was an honest music too, in that no one was posing or following a US rock style book. You didn't have to leave your brain in the dressing room, and the music told you that an interest in Messiaen and Hendrix might be compatible. You have to remember this was before 'Progressive rock', which always seemed to be about musicians who had had a lot of classical piano lessons and wanted to pump it up on stage in the overblown manner of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. Henry Cow was more about questioning the separation of 20th century composition and rock, set in a context of happenings, psychedelia and street theatre. Becoming friends with this group made college life considerably more interesting. By this time my patience with Roman history seminars was wearing thin. I had a nasty case of mumps, which got me isolated in a hospital room, a small mirror on the opposite wall; I was told not to move my back. I also took part in a production of a Greek comedy, staged in ancient Greek of course, for which I played Frank Zappa-style flute music while suspended high above the stage, dressed as a bird, in a gently swaying cage. By the end of a week of this, I was staggering everywhere, affected by motion sickness and nausea.

I started playing occasionally with Henry Cow, when there was room in the van. Fred Frith showed considerable generosity, or recklessness, by inviting me on stage for an improvised set when we hadn't even been properly introduced. He also played me a recording of Takemitsu's *November Steps*, and so I heard the sound of the shakuhachi for the first time. Meanwhile, Henry Cow searched for a drummer.

Several were tried, but a remarkable musician was needed to render convincingly those constantly varying time signatures and tempos. And so it came to pass that Chris Cutler was auditioned (in 1972), and got the job, and I was excited to be present. Cutler announced he liked the group's "row", and immediately propelled them onto another level, a more extrovert mode of performance, maybe more accessible. 13/8 was meat and drink to Cutler, as was free improvising; and being suitably opinionated, he slotted well into the fierce debating society that the group became once offstage.

But did Henry Cow lose something by appointing a drummer? The first LP, *Legend*, was recorded with Cutler in 1973. Those pre-1972 concerts had a weird but warm chamber quality that I've never heard in another group. All three instruments had to state the complex rhythms with no percussive help. And then there's the febrile excitement of hearing a group early on, before they've really discovered what it is they do. Drummer or no drummer, the rock press gave Henry Cow a hard time, usually by fabulously ignoring them. As Hanif Kureishi wrote, pop music is "a form crying out not to be written about". Some rock critics seemed to despise themselves for writing at all, and compensated by adopting a virile anti-intellectualism. Groups like Soft Machine and Henry Cow received a warmer welcome in Europe, where maybe there was less sense of shame at enjoying complex composition, improvisation and blues all at the same time. Or possibly they were suckers for pretentious nonsense? Whatever, I felt that an England with a bit more cultural self-confidence, a bit less kowtowing to American models, would have taken Henry Cow more to its heart, would have been proud of producing something so odd and multi-coloured. □

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This month



With this month's issue of *The Wire*, all subscribers worldwide received a free copy of *Exploratory Music From Portugal*, a new compilation that surfs a tidal wave of Atlantic avant gardists

Specially compiled to coincide with the Atlantic Waves festival of new Portuguese music which takes place in London in November, *Exploratory Music From Portugal* features 20 tracks by some of the country's most advanced musicians, including Telecru, Carlos Zingaro, Nuno Rebello, Manuel Mota, Carlos Barreto, Pedro Carneiro, Lula Pena and Megafone. From fado to free improvisation, electroacoustics to eclectic songforms, chamber works to solo guitar white-outs, the CD describes Portugal's diffuse underground music networks in vivid detail. For more information on the Atlantic Waves festival go to www.atlanticwaves.org.uk

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With next month's issue of *The Wire*, all subscribers worldwide will receive a free copy of *Staubgold*, a new compilation from the Cologne based electronic label

The *Staubgold* label has long been an outlet for some of Europe's most compelling electronic and experimental music activity. This exclusive new compilation features 14 tracks drawn from the label's recent catalogue of releases by Alexander Balanescu, Groenland Orchester, Mapstation, Ekkehard Ehlers, Institut Für Feinmotorik, Rouboz, Rafael Toral, To Rococo Rot, Gunter Adler & Felix Kubin, FS: Blumm, Sack & Joseph Suchy, Oren Ambarchi & Martin Ng and Schlammpfeitzer. In addition, the CD contains an MPEG video of Groenland Orchester's "Tonika Oase". For more information on the *Staubgold* label go to www.staubgold.com

Exploratory Music From Portugal and *Staubgold* are the latest installments in an ongoing series of CDs which are specially produced for *The Wire* and given away to all the magazine's subscribers worldwide. These CDs are only available to *Wire* subscribers, and are not on sale with the magazine in the shops. If you are not yet a subscriber you can still get your hands on copies of both *Exploratory Music From Portugal* and *Staubgold* by taking out a new subscription to *The Wire* this month. Just turn to page 105 or go to www.thewire.co.uk.

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